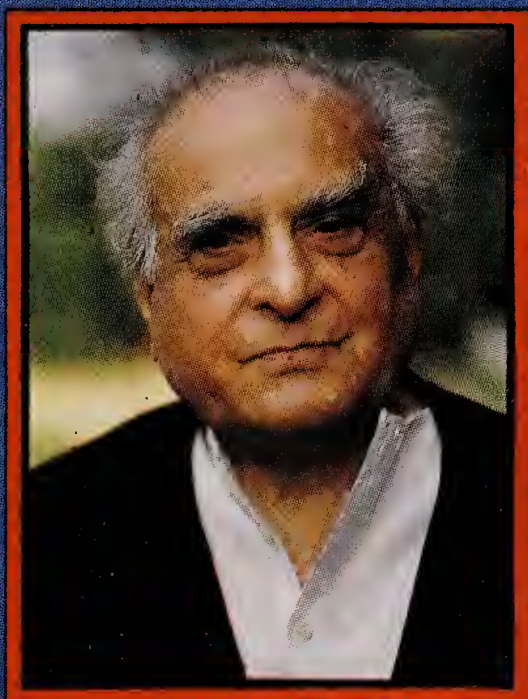


P.N. HAKSAR

OUR TIMES &
THE MAN




EDITOR
BIDYUT SARKAR

FOREWORD by
K. NATWAR SINGH

AFTERWORD by
MULK RAJ ANAND

PARMESHWAR NARAIN HAKSAR is a very remarkable man. He has been variously described as the most distinguished public servant of his generation, a great Indian of our times, and one of our finest citizens. His contribution to our national life has been many-splendoured. "Few people have done as much for the country as he has," says one of our most respected and hard-headed industrialists. This book, a *festschrift* on the occasion of Haksar's 75th birthday, is the first full-length account of his lifework. It has been edited by Bidyut Sarkar, who did an earlier volume on Jawaharlal Nehru for Unesco.

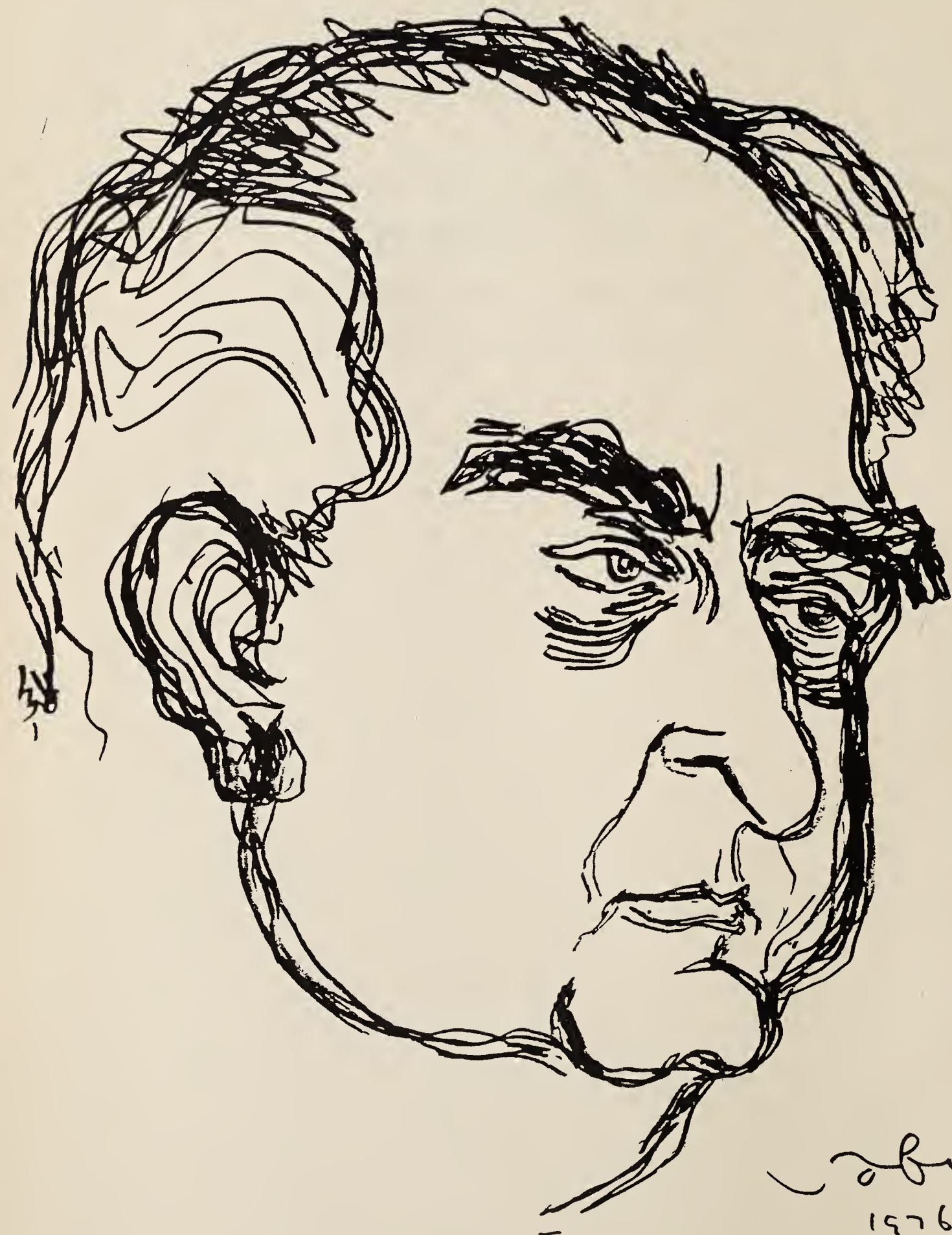
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P.N. HAKSAR

Our times and the man



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1976

P.N. HAKSAR

Our times and the man

Writings on the occasion
of his 75th birthday

Editor
BIDYUT SARKAR



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BIDYUT SARKAR

Introduction

Making a ritual of anniversaries and idolising persons in public life are equally disapproved by the man this book seeks to honour. Why then bring together a group of men and women in a collection of writings on the occasion of P.N. Haksar's 75th birthday and risk embarrassment to the subject himself?

We had to weigh in balance the form and the substance. Ceremonies are anathema to Haksar, but books and ideas are among his most treasured companions. The book, we thought, would provide a fitting opportunity for conversation between him and some of his friends, colleagues and disciples who have shared—or disagreed—in their perceptions over the years.

Haksar's worldview is relatively well known, thanks to the two books and many articles he has written and the scintillating thoughts he continues to express before a wide range of civic, professional, scientific and business audiences throughout the country. But he has maintained a reticent dignity about his lifework. An unrepentant civil servant as he likes to describe himself, he has in accordance with the service code not spoken out on his role in government, the decisions he has influenced that changed the map and the polity of the subcontinent or, more imponderably, the

course of action he failed to persuade on Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and which might have served her administration with continuity and stability to release forces of further change.

A civil servant has rarely been esteemed to be worthy of a *festschrift*. But Haksar was no ordinary sort of civil servant. He is known as the most outstanding one of his generation. His work in chronological order has spanned four major phases: conduct of diplomacy and international relations; policy control and crisis management as Secretary and later Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister; direction of the nation's economic planning and scientific-industrial research superstructure; and, since retirement, guidance of the affairs of several national institutions of knowledge and learning and academies for the promotion of arts and letters. The totality of Haksar's work forms the basis on which one of our most respected industrialists concluded: "Few people have done as much for the country as he has."

In the first part of this book, each of these areas of Haksar's main concerns of the present and the future is discussed by authors who have distinguished themselves in that particular field. They write from the perspective of their interaction with Haksar but with discretion in regard to matters of state that must still remain privileged information. However, we get enough of a comprehensive view with keen insights into the inner nature of issues and public policies that remain on the nation's agenda. Some myths are also better understood. The mystique of the Prime Minister's Secretariat, which was a mutual action of the expanded office and Haksar's approach to it, is subjected to an analysis by P.N. Dhar who succeeded him at its helm. The folklore of "the Hindu rate of growth" commonly attributed to Raj Krishna is traced by B.P.R. Vithal to its original reference point—the latter's own article published earlier in *Economic and Political Weekly* (annual number, Feb. 1973).

The second part features a more personalised aspect of Haksar's work and philosophy of life. His formative years as

a student and at the Allahabad Bar are recapitulated by some of those who have known him longest at home and abroad. The making of one of our finest citizens, as Haksar has been described, precedes a discussion by others on his wide interests and significant contributions in many areas of national life.

Several academic, scientific and artistic disciplines are represented in this book. The twenty-six authors include bureaucrats and scholars, diplomats and planners, scientists and captains of industry, journalists and literary men, as well as performers of the fine arts. Many bring into focus issues that are crucial to the function of governing in present-day India, particularly in such areas as administration at home and foreign policy, education and welfare, planning and development of an industrial culture and a scientific spirit. They provide both cross-fertilisation and convergence of ideas. Raja Ramanna resumes a debate with Haksar on what should be the methods and attitudes of a scientist. The final essay comes in the form of Mulk Raj Anand's open letter to Haksar on the need to build a participatory (rather than parliamentary) democracy and the character of the individual in Indian society.

I acknowledge with gratitude the help of those who have responded with their articles for this volume in spite of the many demands on their time. K. Natwar Singh and Nikhil Chakravartty have given me much encouragement. My thanks also go to those who were not able to write but were unstinted in their moral support of the project which kept it going. All responsibility for errors and delayed publication is, of course, mine.

September, 1988

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A.K. DAMODARAN is an ambassador turned academic based in New Delhi.

P.N. DHAR succeeded P.N. Haksar as Secretary to the Prime Minister. He was subsequently Asst. Secretary-General, United Nations, and is now Chairman, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi.

K.S. DUGGAL, litterateur, is a former Director of National Book Trust and Adviser (Information), Planning Commission.

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SUBIMAL DUTT held several high positions in government and as India's Ambassador to Bonn, Moscow and Dacca. He is President, Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta.

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G. PARTHASARATHI has been journalist, diplomatist and educationist. He was first Vice-Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, and Chairman of Policy Planning Committee, Ministry of External Affairs; Indian Council of Social Science Research; and Indian Institute of Mass Communication.

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ALICE THORNER and her late husband, Daniel, spent most of the 1950s in India. They settled in Paris at the invitation of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (School of Advanced Studies in Social Sciences), returning frequently on research tours.

B.P.R. VITHAL is Member of the High Power Pay Committee of the Government of India. A retired Indian Administrative Service officer, he served the Centre and the state of Andhra Pradesh in senior finance and planning positions.

Part I

K. NATWAR SINGH

Foreword

On September 4, 1988, P.N. Haksar completed 75 years. To mark the event his friends and admirers have contributed articles for this book.

This is perhaps the first time that a former civil servant has aroused such affectionate passion. But PNH was no run-of-the-mill civil servant. Endowed with a first-rate intellect, a deeply analytical mind, a fine command over Hindi and English, a flinty sense of humour, strong nerves, a love of truth, fearlessness, compassion, detachment, a horror of humbug, enormous moral stamina, he has today a place in our national life which many holders of high political office must envy. His pronouncements on national and international subjects invite attention, stimulate serious debate, revive hope. He has a national constituency among the truthful, the sensitive and the reflective.

P.N. Haksar gave up a promising legal career to join the Indian Foreign Service in 1947. His name had been recommended to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru who said to Panditji, "Haksar is the coming man at the Allahabad Bar." Jawaharlal Nehru has made generous references to P.N. Haksar at several places in his Selected Works.

From 1948 to 1967 his career in the IFS was a steady

progression up the ladder. He was our first High Commissioner to Nigeria, then Ambassador to Austria. He was Deputy High Commissioner in London during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan conflict. When Mrs. Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister she decided to ask PNH to head her Secretariat. I was a middle-level member of that establishment at the time (1966-71), the first IFS officer selected to serve in it. PNH had been my boss in 1959-60. But I really got to know him well in the late 1960s. I admired him immensely. Most personal relationships do not remain constant. This one has, with just one short, shadowy spell in the mid-1970s.

PNH attracted national attention when he presided over Mrs. Gandhi's Secretariat from 1967 to 1973. It was a small, compact, functional and faceless team of rather exceptional individuals. PNH was the undisputed captain. He inspired both affection and awe. Awe of the right kind. One never sent up anything slipshod to him. When sent for, one was slightly tense. He soon made the impact of his powerful personality felt in the corridors of power. In the process he changed the character of the PM's Secretariat, its relationship to other ministries and departments of government. Civil servants are required to be anonymous, unseen, to be heard behind closed doors. No member of Mrs. Gandhi's staff sought publicity, PNH least of all. He considered self-advertising unseemly and vulgar. His direction of policy, his conceptualising of it, his penetrating analysis of events, his deep understanding of the dynamics of national and international events, could not but attract attention. It also aroused envy. The ICS were the most afflicted. He thought poorly of most of them.

Till 1973, Mrs. Indira Gandhi had implicit faith in Haksar's judgment and full confidence in his tactical and strategical planning. She knew what the country wanted. He knew how to produce well thought-out, integrated, relevant policies. On four major events his role was crucial and his advice decisive. Many have taken credit for each but those

who do know, know that Haksar alone held the key. The 1969 Congress split, the Indo-Soviet Treaty, the birth of Bangladesh and the Simla Agreement cannot be mentioned without acknowledging P.N. Haksar's monumental contribution. There was no dithering, no directionless paralysis. No loss of nerve or national purpose. He never got into a flap. What impressed one and all was his composure. He had no time for calculated ambiguity, for phoney meddlers in serious undertakings, or for congenital amateurs who passed judgment on matters that even wise men found complicated.

It was during these years (1969-72) of Mrs. Gandhi's tenure that the government and the Congress party appeared as a vehicle of history and change. Haksar had much to do with this. He had a philosophy of government and administration which was informed by a passion for justice, freedom, uprightness and an awakening of our consciousness. He understood that "Societies did not die from contradictions but from their inability to remove them." He wanted to change and renew society, but by the right means, right ideas, moral purpose, and at the same time avoiding distortions of reality.

In his two books, *Premonitions: Imperatives of Change* and *Reflections on our Times*, P.N. Haksar's personal and political credo is spelled out with clarity and courage. His powerful critical intellect and his integrity are outraged by the virus of vulgarity, the bacteria of bad taste, the cancerous spread of the political pollution, the mushrooming of frauds and upstarts, the spurious, the pretentious, the hawking of pseudo-profundities, the moral backsliding, the crass opportunism, the pretentious silliness, and the lowering of standards of rectitude.

In the introduction to *Premonitions*, he writes:

"When I was enlisted in the Foreign Service, I was 35 years of age. I was not a stranger to life. And yet when it came to dealing with images of our country so universally and tenaciously held even by the educated and the informed, the

task of explaining India to other peoples and governments with widely differing history, traditions, preoccupations and interests was baffling. . . . Since the human mind yearns for simplicity, India became Hindu and Pakistan a Muslim State. And the Kashmir question became an example of India perversely resisting the logic of partition. Kingsley Martin, who was friendly and normally rational, died in the belief that Nehru's ethnic origin was the cause of the trouble in Kashmir. I endeavoured to counter this particular piece of Martinian superstition by facetiously suggesting that on this reasoning the hastening of the liquidation of the British Empire by Lord Mountbatten could be perhaps explained by his Battenberg ancestry and was thus a subconscious and genetically induced revenge of Germany's defeats in the two world wars." Here you have humour mounted on logic destroying a myth.

Later he flattens another holy cow: "That we are inheritors of an ancient civilisation which shares with China the distinction of continuity in its survival over several millennia gave me no satisfaction. While the Chinese humiliation was a matter of textbook knowledge, the deep sense of humiliation of having been conquered and ruled from the distant island had seared my consciousness. I discovered later in West Africa how slavery had deeply scarred the racial unconscious of the Africans. And when one found that the distant island race conquered India by enlisting Indians I began to ask myself what makes a country into a nation, more specially a country like ours with its diversities. I can write an ode in praise of our diversities, but I knew too that such compositions combined with our attempts to take refuge in the Golden Ages of the past were merely an ex-post-facto rationalisation of our past humiliation and an attempt to escape from our present concerns."

Historical amnesia among the sons and daughters of Bharat is chronic and widespread. No other people is so supremely indifferent to history as the Indian. We disregard

time. We invoke eternity. We leap, Hanumanlike, from Ashok to the Guptas, from Harsha Vardhan to Akbar, from Akbar to Nehru, paying no heed to disagreeable and degrading events in between. Forty-one years after Independence we are unwilling to face up to our shortcomings. Does anyone ask why Babar with less than 10,000 men could conquer North India? Why a callow young scribe of the East India Company triumphed at Plassey? Why a mere 100,000 Englishmen ruled India with such ease? To ask such inconvenient questions would involve soul-searching, self-criticism, maturity and historical detachment. P.N. Haksar does precisely that. He is not a comfortable writer to be with.

He concludes his Introduction to his book *Premonitions*, not on a stale negative note, but on a constructive, positive one: "I hope these themes and ideas will stimulate the urge to comprehend in all its baffling complexity, the realities which we Indians might wish to change, one way or another. And change we must if we are not to be left behind once more. Our country has had its devotees of *Prema Marga* and *Bhakti Marga*. Perhaps, our salvation lies through the much more difficult *Jnana Marga*. And this *Jnana Marga* must of necessity adopt the methodology of *Vijnana*."

Saluti, PNH.

J.C. KAPUR

Retreat to Sanity and New Visions

The last 75 years have been a period of many discontinuities and irreversible changes of historic proportions. We have seen the two world and many regional wars, breakdown of the colonial structure, the birth and quantum leaps of many technologies, including nuclear, space and telecommunication, and consequently vast techno-economic changes and acceleration of the industrial revolution.

During the post-second world war period, there was a major shift in the international power balances. The United States, fortified by its wartime armament-based affluence and techno-economic power, replaced Britain as the arbiter of human affairs. The emergence of the Soviet Union as a superpower was another significant event of the period. Within less than a decade this led to the rearrangement of the capitalist and socialist bloc countries, under the leadership of the respective superpowers.

Socialist bloc countries in general and the Soviet Union in particular were considered the instigators and supporters of anti-colonial movements and radical trends in the newly liberated colonies, thus adding another dimension to the

already souring relationships between the two blocs and the escalation of the cold war. In the subsequent decades, when most of the newly emerging countries were groping for development strategies, their politico-economic policies became the focus of attention from the power blocs. And soon they were transformed into battlegrounds for ideological confrontation backed by overt and covert actions. Consequently, the patterns of their socio-economic orientation had more to do with the compulsions posed by their relationship with either bloc rather than the basic needs of their populace, their cultural background and available resources.

Aid and technology transfer further accelerated these processes, because both the aid giver and the recipient wanted to create conditions conducive to the ease of such transfer. Along with technology transfer came the energy infrastructure because both are inseparable, and this brought centralisation, premature urbanisation, capital intensification and unemployment in its wake. It introduced consumerist value systems and production techniques, thus creating captive urban elites, distorted priorities, and mass deprivation and poverty in the rural areas. While the developed societies face the consequences of uncontrolled consumption and waste, the poorer two-thirds of the world in the process of acquiring basic necessities is being pushed down the road to helplessness, often bankruptcy.

The bulk of the population in the developing societies, over three-fourths in the case of India, resides in rural communities. All through history these communities were integrated self-contained units, meeting most of their basic needs in the immediate environment, and provided political stability and cultural continuity. Pressures for centralisation through the use of high energy converters disrupted the existing social and economic fabric in the villages and started a compulsive trend of increasingly shifting productive activities to the urban areas.

The course of technological evolution of industrial

societies is set by their own compulsions. The developing countries, on the other hand, have been living under a highly promoted illusion of rapid development with imported technologies. And most of the time this has been a socio-economic mismatch, intensifying or creating more problems than resolving them. Bringing in power transmission lines where there was no firewood to cook meals, antibiotics where there was no drinking water, television where there were no schools, constituted some of these problems. Urban pull was the next step. So an energy techno-economic white elephant, including a defence system, has been let loose on the willing and hypnotised elites of the developing societies.

India was one of the few exceptions which at least endeavoured to retain its freedom of action. Through a policy of political non-alignment, a controlled market economy, and a large public sector it escaped an irreversible commitment to the consumerist path. With the emergence of a large urban elite and the acceleration of the consumerist processes by many orders of magnitude this position is, however, rapidly changing. And the public sector effected at birth by the Soviet genes and the Indian hierarchical social structure has become highly bureaucratised and inefficient. We have thus become the victims of two self-neutralising processes both within and outside the power structure and are now suffering from the negative aspects of both systems of development.

The free market economies which dominated the international techno-economic and financial institutions during the recent decades are now going through a grave crisis. Some of the major economic systems are becoming unsustainable through an over-production of their high technology products for restricted markets, and the increasing burdens of a disproportionately large service sector in their high-waste armament-based economies. And corrective mechanisms within the systems are being eroded through innumerable social excesses. Thus, the fast moving images of our dream world of consumerist utopias are now

trapped in pentagonal fetters of the threats of nuclear annihilation; ecological disaster; economic bankruptcy; breakdown of the ethical and moral order; mounting addiction of narcotics and the white plague of AIDS.

Not only are these islands of affluence getting hooked to the symbols and values of a decadent consumerism, but their very survival has become dependent on their continuation on the same course. It is not possible to innovate and contain new social arrangements within the same paradigms. This makes transformation to a new socio-economic order through peaceful social regenerative processes uncertain.

The socialist societies are going through their own processes of attrition. There are growing compulsions to escape the self-limiting triple straitjacket of excessive bureaucratisation, ideological rigidity in a changed environment, and over-commitment to centralised armament-based against need-based development. The initiation of the processes of Glasnost and Perestroika reflects attempts to correct anomalies, release the system from its leash and give precedence to a structure of welfare as against the structure of power, privileges and perquisites. Such new responses for change if stabilised may carry the seeds, and contribute towards the emergence, of a new human order.

Both these systems of development and social organisation are also facing the consequences of having ignored the human dimension from two opposite directions — one of excesses and the other of constraints. They are now seeking either avenues of retreat from this situation with cataclysmic potential or new linkages and diversions to retain their structure of affluence. Countries of the Asian landmass and the Indian-Pacific Oceans region constitute a part of this design and strategy for the future.

And this decline of the consumerist-armament systems can provide countries of the size of India emotional support to reorder their strategies and possibly respite from intervention by politico-economic destabilisation forces. But

any real and sustained development will rest on our ability to shift our concerns and effort towards the satisfaction of the basic needs of our vast population. A plan for bipolar development which simultaneously integrates centralised infrastructural transformation with a planned decentralised approach to the eradication of widespread human deprivation can alone provide stability and security.

Nowhere outside the United States and the Soviet Union, two prime factors on the world scene today, is there a critical mass of trained manpower and enlightened individuals as in India. A leadership, with the right vision and priorities and the will to act, could help release the innovative capabilities and catalyse the desires of a nation of 850 million people and in the process build a structure of equity and justice. We allowed ourselves to become victims of the temptations and terror of a consumerist export-led, and armament-based, development. We created an illusion that a few million people jetting around the world and building prosperity for a few could carry the burdens, and replace the involvement and efforts, of “hundreds of millions” of people. As a consequence of such an approach over 50 per cent of the Indian people are still languishing below the poverty line.

India has adequate human and other resources; and infrastructures for development. Even the nature of the problem has been fairly well defined. The turmoil of now admittedly outdated ideologies and techniques, confrontation of interests and power centres, even conflict of personalities are all conspiring to convert future hopes into current disasters. The vector of forces within the power structure is shifting from one position to another with such rapidity that it is hard to discern the direction of events or policies. The social arrangements that we have been aiming for are falling apart.

In the midst of these declining utopias the basic issues facing us today are not as to who will be the superpowers of the future and dominate the twenty-first century; but who will contribute towards a new sustainable civilisation. Who

will shape the new order of equity and justice, meeting the basic needs for food, shelter, health, education and employment for billions of people now surviving if at all at the periphery of the urban consumerist, armament jungles? How to save our ecology and resources and above all to restore the ethical and the moral order and protect this vital human dimension, the central core and foundation of all continuity, stability and progress?

The Cartesian approach of breaking up more complex systems into smaller parts, while helping to solve many basic and developmental problems to high standards of excellence, does not relate these harmoniously with the real human issues.

As a consequence, all systems — socio, techno-economic and human — are broken into bits and pieces. And there is no force left to cope with the complexity or autonomy of these systems. So, we are caught in a cycle of undifferentiated growth in which human concerns are at best peripheral. In terms of welfare, what would for instance happen if defence-related expenditure were to be subtracted rather than added to the GNP? Many of the developed countries would start appearing semi-developed. If the widely distributed social costs of urbanisation and ecological destruction were also to be subtracted, there would be a less euphoric parade of the rising GNP in most countries both developed and developing. The many unaccounted subsidies within the national and international systems are providing the high-energy, high-technology systems a precarious lease of life. This system of reverse subsidies from the poor to the rich, from the lower level to the higher level, is being retained at a very high energy and economic cost and cannot be sustained for too long. The sources of all these subsidies are now drying up.

This moment of time is opportune. Prompted by the visions of an uncertain and cataclysmic future, the constructive urges of man may well provide the potential and thrust for an orderly change to a decentralised way of life

in the developing world.

Four streams of thought — spiritual, scientific, philosophical and aesthetics — guided human affairs through the millenniums. Their ways diverged with the extension of the Cartesian thought in the West, which resulted in increasing remoteness of all human creativity from its common origin. And thus our inability to assess both the disintegrative processes in the social organism and their unifying linkages to relate to the problem at their roots rather than the thousands of their visible branches. This tower of Babel, bereft of the human corrective responses we have created around ourselves, has led to a unidimensional physical and interrupted human evolution and mass production of gun-toting human ‘Rambos’ and only a few integrated human beings.

A retreat from this situation will only be possible for those with lower levels of commitment to this path, an awareness of its consequences, and new visions of the future — unfettered by the hypnosis of consumerist symbols and values. For centuries dreamers, scholars and sages have reflected on these possibilities. The unlimited proliferation of means and their psychic backlash will call for rearrangement of human affairs and from new reference points, which were non-existent centuries ago when seeds of today’s world were sown.

What should be the contours of a world without power blocs and free of human, physical, intellectual and spiritual annihilation is another matter. To realise such a state, we have to seek answers in terms of the Indian reality, its continuity and the core of the Indian thought which is the interrelatedness of all phenomena and the human being as a part of the larger cosmic order. This process was interrupted through the Cartesian logic. It is time we restored it.

R.C. DUTT

Indian Bureaucracy in Transition

It was one of the privileges of my career, and a major one at that, that I came across, in course of my service, a person of the intellectual calibre and moral integrity of P.N. Haksar. Moral integrity is more important, but unfortunately rarer than the former in the civil service. Haksar possesses both in ample measure, but it is his unshakeable integrity and his rational approach to problems that draw admiration even from those who do not fully share his views.

The 1930s when Haksar, like many of us, his contemporaries, found himself in England for higher studies was a period of disillusionment with capitalism and the existing world order. The Great Depression had cast doubts on the fairness and stability of the capitalist system, while the rise of fascism in Europe had threatened once again, so soon after the end of the first world war, the peace and freedom for which it had been fought. The promise of a dawn, on the other hand, heralded by the survival of the Soviet Union, and its reconstruction with the help of Five Year Plans, in spite of reaction, both at home and abroad, that had threatened to overwhelm it, held out new hopes. The progressive nationalist forces in India symbolised by

Jawaharlal Nehru had rekindled this hope with Nehru's visit to the Soviet Union in 1927. India began to look upon its struggle against British colonialism as a part of the world-wide struggle against imperialism, and toward the Soviet Union as a partner in that struggle. Fascism was regarded as a last ditch effort to save capitalism. It had therefore to be fought. Nehru's visit to Spain in 1935 in support of the Republican forces and his subsequent visit to France and England underlined this message to the Indian students abroad.

It was natural in the circumstances that Haksar, like many of his compatriots in British universities at the time, imbibed a socialist ideology. To him, however, it was an ideology, not a dogma. He remained loyal to the basic principles of the ideology, but was prepared to adjust them to the circumstances created by the War, and the fast-moving technological changes that followed. While many of us, his contemporaries, succumbed to the "exigencies" of life, and allowed ourselves to be carried by the tide of events, Haksar, along with a select few like Mohan Kumaramangalam, remained steadfast to his principles. Later, when India achieved independence, and he was invited to join the Foreign Service he did so, not for a career but for service. He served till his superannuation, and even for a spell thereafter as Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, but he desisted from offering his services to government when he felt that his views were no longer acceptable to it.

Haksar's association with the civil service was thus of a man of principles seeking to serve his country, and the world beyond, through the national bureaucracy. It would, therefore, be appropriate in a volume of essays written in his honour to reflect on the role of bureaucracy in India, especially in the period of transition from colonialism to democracy, its reconstruction after the transfer of power, the role it is playing at present and the prospects ahead in this respect. To what extent does it provide an opportunity for men of principle, like Haksar, to serve the country through

the bureaucracy?

On independence India inherited a well-organised Civil Service, the higher echelons of which were drained of their foreign components, but were still left with a hard core of efficient Indian personnel. The services had, however, been organised for the imperial task of governing a sub-continent in the interest of the metropolitan country, and though liberal values borrowed from the British model had been superimposed on the Indian variant these values were discarded as soon as they conflicted with imperial interests. One such value was the British concept of neutrality of the civil service but, in the Indian context, neutrality could never extend to the nationalist movement, when the movement clashed with imperial objectives. It was no wonder therefore that when in the 1940s the Quit India movement threatened the very existence of the imperial regime the then Secretary of State declared that the civil services of India were with them and against the "rebels". A mild ripple of protest arose from the Indian members of the higher civil services, who argued that they were merely carrying out the declared policies of government, and should not be regarded as opposed to any movement as such. Such views were, however, frowned upon, one or two officers suspected of "dereliction" of duty "dealt with", and it soon became clear that any protest based upon the concept of neutrality of the civil service would not only be futile but worse. Obviously, the concept, though British in origin, could not be extended to British imperial administration.

The concept of civil service neutrality was, however, widely though uncritically accepted by the independent Government of India, and it formed the underlying assumption on the basis of which the post-independence civil service was structured. Indeed, a larger measure of validity was attached to the concept than the British had done. Our immediate post-independence rulers, though faced with the arduous task of building a post-colonial society, did not find the concept of civil service neutrality a

hindrance, as the British had done in maintaining their imperial regimes in the colonies.

The fact, however, is that the concept has only a limited validity. It has greater validity in regard to the means to be adopted, than to the ends to be achieved, for the means admit of a far greater measure of flexibility than the ends. There could be no neutrality in pre-independence India, for instance, between British domination and independence, though there could be about the means to achieve independence. Nor could there be any neutrality now between the existing social order and a socialist transformation of society for those who regard the former as immoral and exploitative, though the path to socialism might be open to discussion. Civil service neutrality, to be fruitful, must be based on a consensus of basic values, the ends, in regard to which there must be a commitment. It is only in regard to the modalities of achieving these values, the means, that there can be differences, and for which civil service neutrality can be insisted upon.

It was indeed such a consensus that led to the theory being formulated in Britain. The two main parties then were the Conservative and the Liberal, and the main difference between them was on matters like free trade. It is understandable in the circumstances that the civil service was urged, in fact required, to be neutral.

The position in India at the transfer of power was by no means similar. The contradiction then was no longer between imperialism and nationalism, for Indian nationalism had been recognised and the foreign personnel, with stray exceptions, withdrawn from the higher services. It was no longer open to any Indian in the civil service, even if he had so wished, to deny his Indian identity and continue to promote foreign interests. There was indeed the problem of incompatibility of the civil servants inherited from a regime where there were clear-cut distinctions between the ruler and the ruled, the conqueror and the conquered, with the democratic way of functioning. This incompatibility

sometimes manifested itself in behavioural patterns and resulted in failure to enlist the co-operation of the people. This was, however, a behavioural failure, not an intellectual one, and could be overcome in time by training. It represented no basic contradiction with democracy, at least of the bourgeois variety, for democracy of this type had been intellectually accepted, and had indeed been held out as the distant goal even of imperialist regimes. The “civilising mission” of the imperialists, however insincere, was a tacit admission of the superiority of democracy, for fitness for democracy was the ultimate test of “Civilisation”.

The major contradiction that emerged on the transfer of power, on the other hand, was between the social outlook of the great majority of the civil servants and the type of post-colonial society that was sought to be built. The loyalty of the civil servants inherited from the imperial regime was easily enough transferred from the foreign to the Indian rulers, but brought up in “liberal” traditions in elite institutions in India and abroad, their focus of loyalty was on the Indian elite. Concepts like the “socialistic pattern of society”, or values like those enshrined in the Constitution found little echo among them, in spite of the mechanical assertion of loyalty to the Constitution by all civil servants.

This contradiction was overlooked in the nationalist fervour generated by triumphant nationalism. The average politician continued to regard the British colonial rulers, their outlook and their way of life to be a major contradiction with what they deemed to be the Indian reality. They criticised the top civil servants inherited from the British regime for their “un-Indian” way of life, not realising the fact that this was at best a superficial contradiction, not likely to outlast the period of transition. In the preoccupation with this contradiction the real emerging contradiction between the classes and the masses received little attention.

This latter contradiction was, however, not lost on a sensitive leader like Jawaharlal Nehru who in addressing the

Indian Institute of Public Administration on April 5, 1958 queried: "Can a person be neutral about the basic thing the State stands for, namely, a socialist pattern of society? Can a civil servant adequately perform functions relating to the attainment of a socialist pattern of society if he is entirely opposed to that conception?" And he answered the latter query himself: "He might, to some extent, but not with any enthusiasm. If he is opposed to the very growth in that direction, he is a drag on it".

And, yet, no action was taken to resolve this contradiction. It was not merely the civil servants inherited from the past who epitomised the contradiction. Elite institutions, unaffected by the concept of a socialist pattern of society, continued to churn out graduates with "liberal" education, and the senior civil servants, keen on reconstructing the depleted civil services after transfer of power and partition in the image of the old, placed a premium on the same kind of education in their recruitment policies. The post-recruitment training institutions were equally unconcerned with socialist values and made no attempt to create a commitment to them.

The result was lack of commitment on the part of the civil services to values which they were enjoined by the Constitution to promote. This lack of commitment, rationalised on the ground of civil service neutrality, really acted against social change in favour of the weak and unorganised masses of the population. In a developing democracy like India, where the struggle of the dominant domestic social forces for ascendancy is supplemented by the efforts of external forces to seek a foothold in the process of development, lack of commitment soon degenerated to pragmatism. Pragmatism is an attempt to balance the forces, domestic and foreign, rather than pursue policies planned for development with justice. And since the forces to be balanced are those that are strong enough to assert themselves, the weak and the unorganised go to the wall.

Whether or not complete neutrality to the need or

otherwise of social change is possible on the part of any thinking person, there is no doubt that the concept of civil service neutrality stretched to such basic values is a factor in favour of status quo and against change. This is so because change needs action and is not promoted by indifference to it, while status quo is sustained by the existing forces and needs no action unless specifically threatened. There is no doubt that this has been so in the Indian experience too after independence. The reversal in the subsequent period of the forces of change, noticeable in the immediate post-independence period, has certainly in the main been due to the strengthening of the forces in favour of status quo, but the lack of commitment of the civil service to such change has also been an important contributory factor.

But it is not the forces of status quo alone that profit by the professed neutrality of the civil service. Apart from the fact that professed neutrality rarely amounts to genuine neutrality, and is more often than not a cover for bias in favour of the status quo, lack of commitment to or devotion to a worthy cause leaves a void in the human psyche which is filled by concern for causes far less worthy. Lack of commitment to basic values thus encourages the tendency to distortions of values. It is a matter of common historical experience that men and women have risen to great heights of valour and sacrifice in pursuit of causes they considered worthwhile, while they have sunk to depths of depravity and selfishness in the absence of such causes. During the freedom struggle hundreds and thousands flocked to face State terror and even death with no concern for their personal interests. All this has now changed in the absence of commitment to basic values, and the baser instincts of man have come to dominate human activities.

The danger of values being distorted for lack of commitment to a worthwhile cause is real in the civil services, collectively, though perhaps slightly pejoratively, referred to as the bureaucracy. This is so because bureaucracy has its own motivations, its own laws of motion which

influence in greater or less measure all those who become parts of it. The hierarchical structure of the bureaucracy is a challenge to all its members to climb the ladder, success being reckoned by the level reached in the hierarchy. This sets in motion a powerful though distorted motivation, namely, careerism.

Success in career advancement brings further rewards apart from general approbation and ego satisfaction. It holds out the lure of power, the more of it the higher one rises in the hierarchy, and power has a magnetic attraction for most human beings. Success also holds promise of satisfaction of secondary human needs, the promise of comfort and even luxury to those who can climb high enough.

Careerism, love of power and attraction for a life of ease generate some of the more undesirable characteristics of bureaucracy. Careers can be advanced as much, perhaps more, by attempts to please those in authority as by sheer efficiency. At any rate, efficiency by itself is hardly ever sufficient to assure advancement to the extent desired. Efficiency has to be mixed with "flexibility", which in its extreme form is indistinguishable from sycophancy. To what extent this has already characterised Indian bureaucracy is a matter for empirical judgment.

Another distortion generated by careerism is intra-service strife. We have evidence of this in India in the controversy between the so-called "generalists" and the so-called "technocrats". The fact that the latter have a genuine grievance against the undue importance attached in the past to the former hardly justifies the claims to exclusiveness advanced by them which would merely reverse the position without improving the efficiency of the services. Still another focus of strife, which has the potential to grow to dangerous dimensions, is between the government bureaucracy and the public sector executives. All these strifes are basically manifestations of the struggle of various groups of bureaucrats to gain access to positions of power and

influence. They may be occasioned by the unfair advantage gained by one group over another, but in the form in which they manifest themselves they reduce rather than enhance the overall efficiency of the bureaucracy.

Love of power similarly often leads to exercise of power in a manner clearly contrary to the public interest. A common phenomenon is the tendency to proliferate or, as is sometimes referred to in India, to build little "empires" within the bureaucracy. This tendency, more generally, though lightly, referred to as Parkinson's Law, is an outcome of the desire to exercise power over wider areas, and is common to bureaucracies all over the world. Still another undesirable consequence of love of power is to concentrate power in the hands of those in positions of authority, and deny it to those at functional levels. An example of this in India is the persistence with which the bureaucracy (not excluding the ministers in this instance) hangs on to power and exercises it, often informally, by word of mouth, in relation to the public enterprises, in spite of the general consensus that there should be no such interference. Even such devices as Memoranda of Understanding are reported to have failed to make any difference in this respect.

Such concentration also leads to centralisation of power which is as harmful politically as it is on functional grounds. Participation is the essence of democracy, the denial of which by power-hungry bureaucrats (and politicians) is often the cause of alienation.

The worst form of distortion, however, arises when bureaucracy itself becomes an interest group with its own vested interests. In a grosser form it gives rise to evils like bribery and corruption, but even apart from these unlawful acts it gives rise to a variety of demands for higher remunerations, better perquisites, and in short for a position of privilege in society. There is thus a growing alienation of the bureaucracy from the people, making it increasingly an instrument unfit for the realisation of popular aspirations.

It would be an exaggeration to suggest that a call for

commitment to social values would completely eliminate these distortions. There will always be some, if not many, in a large bureaucracy who would be indifferent to such a call. Institutional arrangements are necessary to deal with the problem. Nevertheless, commitment to basic values is a big step in the right direction, for such commitment cannot co-exist with pursuit of personal or group interests. No-one really committed to certain ends can be indifferent to them, and pursue narrower objectives. Growth of vested interests is a negation of commitment, and the danger of such growth is reduced proportionately as commitment becomes real.

The danger of bureaucratic distortion has grown with the increase of State-intervention in modern times. The danger is greater in socialist than in capitalist states, for in the former the State assumes larger responsibilities than in the latter. This is of course not an argument against socialism, but for the need for greater vigilance in this respect in socialist states. In capitalist states the danger comes from agencies outside government, from the dominant classes in society. This is in fact more difficult to control than an agency of government. Nevertheless, it is true that bureaucracy as a phenomenon presents problems which socialist states cannot afford to ignore.

The danger has manifested itself in several socialist states, most notably in China and in the Soviet Union. In China the remedial measures have taken a direction not entirely predictable at present. It may well lead to a counter-revolution. In the Soviet Union, on the other hand, the country-wide movement, Perestroika, functioning within the socialist framework, seeks to control bureaucracy both at the government and at the party level.

India, on the contrary, is completely unmindful of the increasing malfunctioning of the bureaucracy, though the danger of such malfunctioning is no less in this country than in the countries mentioned. An insecure leadership, unsure of its own continuance in power, is impatient of dissidence or even constructive criticism. It looks for conformism and is

reassured by sycophancy. The civil service, on the other hand, uncommitted to social ideals, finds sycophancy the easiest way to career advancement which becomes the main object of this endeavour. Service to the nation, if not a casualty, thus occupies a secondary position, and suffers in consequence.

The struggle for career advancement, which includes in its scope struggle for greater powers, more privileges and higher remuneration, is greatly influenced by the surrounding moral atmosphere of the struggle for existence of different classes and groups in society. This atmosphere has deteriorated badly with the recent emphasis on competition and market forces, which has tended to create what Nehru often referred to as "the acquisitive type of society". Such a society functioning in an underdeveloped country where large masses of people are too weak to assert their rights has provided ample opportunities for corruption, and indeed for collective self-aggrandisement at the expense of the poor. The result is that corruption has increasingly invaded the sections of society which have opportunity to indulge themselves, depriving thereby large masses of people who have no such opportunity of the benefits which are their due.

Functioning in this milieu the civil service cannot remain immune from the all-pervading characteristics of acquisitiveness and corruption, except by imbibing a strong commitment to social ideals. Absence of such commitment, by design or otherwise, will increasingly frustrate the basic purpose of the civil service, which is to harmonise class relations in society. Instead, the civil service or the bureaucracy will tend to develop into one more contending group, bent on extracting the most it can out of the benefits society can provide.

The danger of such development in India cannot be ignored. Oblivious of the values enshrined in the Constitution, unmindful of the "socialist pattern of society" which Parliament resolved to build, and uncommitted to

any of these values, the Indian bureaucracy, unless reoriented, will be an impediment rather than a help to the realisation of these ideals. Nevertheless, its basic potential remains. Constituted as the civil services of India are with men and women of high intellectual calibre, with the capacity to absorb the latest skills and techniques, all that they need is proper motivation, training, commitment and a measure of control. The bureaucracy is but an instrument that can be wielded for good or for evil. Many of the deficiencies at present noticed are merely reflections of the weaknesses developed in our society in which it functions. It is for the politicians and for the political processes to remove these weaknesses. Bureaucracy cannot be expected to give the lead in this or, for that matter, in any other respect. It has not done so anywhere in the world. It can only ably follow the leadership. Indian bureaucracy has this capacity. It is for the proper leadership to emerge.

THOMAS ABRAHAM

Need for New Concepts of Administration

On August 7, 1952, the P&O ship *S.S. Strathnaver* steamed off Ballard Pier and headed for Tilbury docks. It had on board, among other passengers, one newly married couple, P.N. Haksar and his bride Urmila, and one greenhorn, newly inducted into the Indian Foreign Service. Haksar was posted back to London as Political Counsellor, somewhat against his wishes since he had already done his stint in Britain as First Secretary. I was on my way to Massachusetts to study international law and international affairs in one of the better known schools in the States, specialising in such esoteric matters as they then were.

Three days out of Bombay, I went up to Mr. Haksar and introduced myself. He stared at me through his bushy eyebrows, and suggested that if we were to meet at the bar that evening for an after-dinner liqueur, this brief acquaintance could perhaps be further explored to mutual benefit. So, we met that evening. Mrs. Haksar declined anything alcoholic. When I ordered a Drambuie, he peered at

me over the wine-card and said, “Why not try kummel; that is, if you like the aroma of caraway seed”.

That evening began a series of conversations that have continued in places as far apart as Delhi and Colombo, Singapore and Switzerland. That evening, I was very impressed with Haksar. Here was a north Indian, who actually knew that south India was not a shadowy area known as “Madras”, but that there were in existence four distinct areas, with distinct and different languages, historicities and cultures. Even more amazing, this man knew that I came from a microscopic group of ossified Christians, long predating the arrival of the Westerners into India, and found only in the princely states of Travancore and Cochin. In a north Indian, I thought all this knowledge remarkable.

“Let us return again to the good we are seeking, and ask what it can be. It seems different in different actions and art; it is different in medicine, in strategy, and in the arts likewise. What then is the good of each? Surely that for whose sake everything else is done. In medicine, this is health; in strategy, victory; in architecture, a house; in any other sphere, something else, and in every action and pursuit, the end; for it is for the sake of this that all men do whatever else they do” (*Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics*). It seems to me that Haksar “in every action and pursuit” has sought, in concrete terms, the realisation of an India that has left behind its feudal structures and attitudes and risen above parochial concerns to become an India that is truly secular and egalitarian. Why he became a civil servant abandoning his chosen profession of the law, we do not know. He has told me that he never was able to resolve the mystery of the telegraphic summons which brought him from Allahabad to New Delhi, there to be put in harness by Jawaharlal Nehru. He was inducted into the fledgling Indian Foreign Service and there he remained till he retired as Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, the only officer from the Foreign Service to have held that post.

The Indian Administrative Service officer in independent India was saddled with the burden of the ICS civil servant of John Company, and later the Crown. It was a past that could not be shaken off. It did not matter that by 1947 the British element had virtually disappeared; the Indian element was presumed to have imbibed in full measure British virtues such as Olympian aloofness, impartiality, imperviousness to considerations of caste, etc. But it did not require much imagination to see that for the Kayasth from UP or the Ayyangar from Tamil Nad gaining entry into the ICS, the whole British ethos was alien and hostile.

At Haileybury, there was a close family spirit. "There were fives and cricket and rowing and some managed to hunt. In the afternoon, the fast men on dog-carts to play billiards at Hertford or Ware or perhaps to slip to town for the afternoon". The ideal model for the Indian civil servant, as Philip Mason says, was one with which every English statesman was familiar—Plato's Guardians: a return to Greece and the fount of European civilisation and culture. But how could Socrates, Plato and the Republic mean anything to the Indian entrant taking the civil service exam? He aspired to a comfortable living and the prestige which came from mixing at least a little on a basis of social equality with the British. In nine out of ten cases, he too held the view that the West is "over-concerned with the material, bogged deep in the lusts of the flesh, lost in the miasma of sex and cinema, eaters of beef, drinkers of strong water, impure and unclean because they use paper in the toilet and clean their teeth with the same tooth brush". Today, 40 years on, the emphasis on the training of the IAS probationer is based solely on our culture, our civilisation and traditions, with not a thought given to Plato. It is quite obvious that the British attempt to graft Plato on to the minds of Indians had been a complete failure, which the Indians submitted to only due to the exigencies of the system.

Within a couple of years of his life in the civil service, Haksar realised this cardinal fact and accepted the corollary

that, in independent India, it would be impractical and hypocritical to hold up the ideal of the detached civil servant, in theory aloof, but in terms of inescapable practice, thoroughly involved in the problems of his land and his own people. Ever since Mr. Haksar came to occupy positions of high responsibility he has been tireless in stating that it is essential that our whole administrative ethos be restructured to take into account the prevailing political reality in India. He has stated his view that the Administrative Reforms Commission is a futile exercise. He saw very clearly the need to honestly redefine the relationship between the politician and the bureaucrat. He was painfully aware of the venality that was permeating the political structure, soon to corrode the administration. It was therefore necessary to commit the civil servant to a set of values in the same way that the British civil servant was committed to the belief that British rule in India was a good in itself, and that the inculcation of notions of fair play, justice and the principles of the playing fields of Eton, by their impartial application, would be wholly beneficial to the natives.

As Haksar says, "And the British maintained the system with admirable regard for the integrity of the system". That the committed civil servant would be a solecism or travesty of the steel frame concept and betrayal of the fine principles of administration we inherited from the British is one of the myths we need to perpetuate in modern India so that we can shut out the inconvenient truth, which is that unless civil servants are taught and drilled into making a firm and unvarying commitment to the concept of a democratic, egalitarian and secular India, they will continue to be committed to the idea that the furtherance of their interests, both in terms of family and caste, is the prime purpose of their entry into public service. For today, perhaps more than before, caste and kinship is the bedrock of Indian society.

Based on experience, it is one of Haksar's beliefs that our politicians, as a class, do not understand that the State system and its invariable concomitant, the bureaucratic system,

cannot function except through the application of strict standards of objectivity. Policy should be what concerns our political masters. Instead it is the petty particularisms of transfers and postings, the exemption from a regulation as a favour, the grant of a concession to one's own caste — this is the essence of political power! It is one of Haksar's beliefs that one of the biggest failures of Nehru was that he was unable to create an institutionalised framework which could have built up his new India. Perhaps he shied away from the task, for it was not in his nature to be ruthless. I remember a conversation we had in the winter of 1953 (I think he was at that time staying in Kensington, having moved out of Hampstead) when, with remarkable prescience, he said that Jawaharlal Nehru had better start building up the new India for there was not much time left — ten years at best.

Then and now, Haksar was conscious of how frail the national idea is in India. Europe, he used to say, has had barely 100 years to get used to the idea of the nation state. We in India had to catch up with the conception. But unlike so many others, who lapse into the error of contrasting “regionalism” with a “strong centre”, he has held the view that India has always been a land of particular regions. Our Constitution proclaims this, and if one may add, so does our national anthem. The British ruled India as an external imperium; Asoka and the Guptas ruled it as an internal imperium. We now have to evolve the idea of a nation shorn of the concept of imperium — one cannot obliterate memories of the Chola and the Vijayanagar empires by ignoring them.

What disturbs Haksar is the current tendency to proclaim patriotism by denying the validity of the regions of India, on the basis that the unity of India will be imperilled. That is not so.

As the newsreel once used to proclaim, “Time Marches On!” Haksar at 75 this year is of a generation that is already out of focus in the media of today — not that he ever was in much focus even 20 years ago. But then his generation,

whether as lawyers, civil servants or journalists, clung to values that are no longer current on the Rialto. In a certain sense they are the epigone of the Gandhi-Nehru tradition. Midnight's children who set the fashion today must decide whether it is enough to stage a Dandi or a Vedaranyam, or to reincorporate its principles into their lives. On current form it is not unlikely that the period in which Haksar and others of his mould who held the stage in our land will, in retrospect, turn out to have been one of the more orderly and civilised episodes in the governance of India.

P.N. DHAR

The Prime Minister's Office

P.N. Haksar has been a diplomat, an administrator, a planner. He has held many key posts and he has held them all with great distinction; it is as Secretary to the Prime Minister, however, that he is most remembered. It was under his stewardship that the Prime Minister's Office (it was called Secretariat then) became prominent in the administrative structure of government and in the public eye. Since then public interest or more correctly media interest in that office has never waned.

Like other limbs of government, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has played its role in the governance of the country, sometimes successfully and sometimes not so successfully. It is in the limelight because of the crisis situations which dramatise the role of the Prime Minister as the ultimate custodian of power and bearer of responsibility. Obviously, the PMO has had to bear the brunt on several such occasions. The split in the ruling party and bank nationalisation in 1969, the Bangladesh developments of 1971, the economic crisis triggered by the first Oil Shock in 1973, and the dangerous situation created by the actions of the Chogyal in Sikkim in 1975 are a few examples.

No doubt all these crises were handled by the Prime Minister with the assistance of other concerned organs and agencies of government, but the PMO had to play the leading role in co-ordinating the total effort to assist the Prime Minister. This was inevitable because in a parliamentary democracy the Prime Minister is the main focus of power and responsibility. The fact that decisions in situations of crisis are left to the Prime Minister does not, however, mean that decisions taken by others in more normal circumstances are less important. These other decisions may indeed be more important in terms of their consequences.

The dramatic aspect of the crisis situations has created an exaggerated impression of the nature and reach of the Prime Minister's power. The Prime Minister is certainly at the apex but the apex, it must be remembered, is only a small part of the pyramid. Regardless of constitutional and other restraints, the personal power of the Prime Minister is limited by the constraint of time and the sheer size of government. A day cannot be stretched beyond its brief span. No-one, howsoever capable he may be, can master the complexities of international affairs, economic policies, defence and security problems and a host of other thorny questions which land on his desk. The quality of a Prime Minister's leadership depends on how and when he realises the limits of power and, having done so, is clear about the uses to which he puts the power he has. And how he relates the apex to the rest of the structure determines the reach of his influence and sets the tone and temper of his government and administration.

As party leader, as dispenser of patronage, as the chairman of the cabinet, as the most important representative of government and the people in Parliament, the Prime Minister wields vast powers. The security of the State and the welfare of the people depend on how and to what purpose power is wielded. The manner in which the Prime Minister influences his colleagues and his administration is a vital question which needs careful study and analysis. But this

area has largely been left to speculation, conjecture and motivated accounts. In the process, a vast body of mythology has developed around the PMO, with the result that there is now a general tendency to regard the Office as some kind of super-cabinet, exercising power in a manner that undermines the democratic process.¹

An occasion like this, when we are felicitating Haksar on his 75th birthday, is perhaps appropriate to attempt to demystify the PMO. A genuine attempt to do so will need an effort on a scale similar to that undertaken by John Mackintosh and his colleagues.² I propose to confine myself to the presentation of some fundamental propositions which are often neglected in public discussion on the subject.

Much of the media discussion so far has been based on a major assumption which needs to be articulated and verified.³ That assumption is that under the cabinet system the Prime Minister only sketches certain lines of policy and lays down general guidelines which his colleagues and subordinates are expected to follow, and that for these functions the Prime Minister does not need a substantive office. This notion has received further support from the belief that Prime Minister Nehru functioned according to this classical pattern.

The concept of the collegiate system of the cabinet in which the Prime Minister is but the chairman of the council of ministers, or first among equals, has been obsolete in the country of its origin for more than a century and is now only a hoary and pedantic anachronism. As Richard Crossman points out, "Even in Bagehot's time it was probably a misnomer to describe the premier as Chairman, and *primus inter pares*". Bagehot's classic study on the English constitution remains, according to Crossman, "an accurate and vivid account of how cabinet government worked *before* the extension of the suffrage, *before* the creation of the party machine, and *before* the emergence of an independent civil service administering a vast welfare state".⁴ Much before some of these developments took place, Gladstone wrote

about the deviation of political realities from political myths connected with the British Prime Minister. He said, "Nowhere in the wide world does so great a substance cast so small a shadow; nowhere is there a man who has so little to show for it in the way of formal title or prerogatives". Thus over the years Bagehot's cabinet system has become what has been called the prime-ministerial system in Great Britain.

There are several reasons for the decline of cabinet as a collective deliberative body. The most important of these is the heavy work-load that governmental activity throws up for cabinet decisions. To be sure, some items of the cabinet agenda can be eliminated without any damage but even after that the volume of business is too big for any meaningful deliberations except in very general terms. Cabinet deliberations are therefore centred more upon the elimination of overlaps and jurisdictional conflicts and harmonisation of viewpoints of the ministries concerned. In other words, cabinet work is largely devoted to problems of co-ordination rather than in-depth analysis of policies or debates on policy choices. Even in the area of policy co-ordination, basic work is done in the parallel committees at the secretariat level.

Normally each cabinet minister concerns himself mainly with his items of the agenda and avoids any critical observations on items relating to other ministries unless his ministry is involved in an interministerial issue. Ministers adopt this stance not only for reasons of prudence, for they would not like their colleagues in turn to pry too much into their ministries, but also for the substantial reason that they would have to work and think a lot more to be able to present an alternative view on a subject with which one has not been directly concerned. It is enough for them to keep themselves informed about the goings-on in other ministries.

The decline of cabinet as a deliberative body is not merely an Indian phenomenon. A similar decline has been noted in the case of the British cabinet, about which an observer has commented: "The cabinet seems to have disintegrated in the

literal sense of that word. Every member of the cabinet is important, but his importance depends on functions that are performed almost entirely outside the cabinet.”⁵ In India the reputation of a cabinet minister depends on his political weight and/or his reputation for efficiency as a minister and not for his contributions to cabinet discussion.

Under the prime-ministerial system, the country is governed by the Prime Minister “who leads, co-ordinates and maintains a series of ministers, all of whom are advised and backed by the civil service. Some decisions are taken by the Premier alone, some in consultation between him and the senior ministers, while others are left to heads of departments, the cabinet, cabinet committees or the permanent officials.”⁶ That is a description of the governance of Britain by Richard Crossman who through his years of experience as minister ought to know. Parallel to the emergence of the prime-ministerial system has been the need for a supportive administrative apparatus for the Prime Minister to enable him to initiate, co-ordinate and monitor policies. This does not preclude the cabinet, or for that matter Parliament, from influencing policy. Their influence operates through the cabinet committees and parliamentary committees with which the Cabinet Secretary’s Office and the Prime Minister’s Office are intimately associated. These offices have played a crucial role in Britain as highlighted by Harold Macmillan who observes: “that it was possible to operate the system and yet retain the confidence of the cabinet as a whole was partly due to the generosity of my colleagues and partly to the skill of Sir Norman Brook and my private secretaries in gaining their confidence.”⁷

Parliamentary democracy and the cabinet system of government in India trace their origins to Great Britain. The traditions of the civil service are also avowedly similar. It is then not surprising that Prime Ministers in the two countries should function in a similar manner. Crossman quoted above could well have been referring to the Indian system. It should, however, be noted that a similarity in

political institutions often disguises important differences. Of course, India like Great Britain is a parliamentary democracy. But below the institutional surface operate social attitudes and behaviour patterns which are dissimilar. It is easier to introduce political institutions than evolve a political culture which will correspond to them and make for their smooth working. The political culture of India embodies and reflects values, beliefs and emotions that have evolved in India; a western (British) type of political culture could not be imported along with the Westminster-type political institutions.

The hiatus between acquired institutions and inherited attitudes and behaviour is what might be called the "cultural lag". We have noted above the more basic reasons for the decline of the cabinet system — reasons common to all parliamentary democracies. In India it is further accentuated by a cultural lag. The pre-modern attitude to authority is based on hierarchical values. It is not therefore surprising if cabinet ministers behave like members of a feudal court towards the Prime Minister and their colleagues in the government, the party and the services. The cabinet is not the only deviant in the system. The cultural lag runs through all our modern democratic institutions. Political protest organised by the opposition groups against a duly elected government takes insurrectionary forms which are similar to those adopted earlier against the British imperialist government. Lobbying for, say, an increase in the procurement price is less a matter of marshalling relevant facts and arguments and more a demonstration of strength to disrupt normal life by techniques like *Rasta Roko*. *Dharna* in Lok Sabha is treated as if it were a parliamentary procedure. It is perhaps not right to call these mechanisms of protest or demands undemocratic. But they seem to belong to an era which precedes a democratic system. They certainly make the working of a democratic system more difficult.

The Prime Minister's Office cannot be insulated from the prevailing cultural milieu in which it functions. For

instance, it constantly receives pleas such as: "it can only be done through your office"; "it can only be decided at the highest level"; "how will P.M. feel about this suggestion?"; "what is his mood like?". These pleas are often made by ministers, civil servants, businessmen and publicists — by people who at the same time complain about the centralisation of power by the Prime Minister. Thus, the temptation to succumb to the feudal ethos is always there, especially for those who are in an advantageous position in the scheme of things. The larger-than-life image of some of the PMO's former junior functionaries underscores the point.

Political culture is not something inert or static. It changes but change comes gradually as inherited expectations and assumptions change. In the field of economic development, it has been noted that in the first phase of development of a backward economy, income distribution deteriorates and improves only after a certain level of development has been reached. Similarly, in the field of political development, the cultural lag seems to widen after the first generation of post-colonial leadership hands over to the more indigenously rooted leadership. The latter are apt to be more dogmatic and authoritarian in their beliefs and behaviour. Respect for democratic norms is the result of long political experience with the working of democratic institutions and therefore a product of slow growth. The period of decolonisation after the Second World War is replete with states which started as democratic regimes but which quickly succumbed to authoritarian ways under indigenous pressures. India has in this respect been an exception but even so its political culture has not escaped the impact of its feudal traditions. Perhaps after a period of maturation the successor leadership and society at large will succeed in evolving a culture which is more appropriate to a modern democracy. For the Prime Minister and his Office this has to be a self-conscious effort.

II

The tasks facing the Prime Minister of a country like India which lacks social cohesion and is handicapped by a fractious history are infinitely more complex and daunting than those of a modern, developed and homogeneous country like Great Britain. The federal polity and an interventionist role of government implicit in the planned development of large areas of social and economic life make for far greater demands on the Indian Prime Minister.

During the long tenure of the first Prime Minister the magnitude and complexities of our problems did not surface for several reasons. Most of his cabinet colleagues were his comrades in the freedom struggle with long periods of involvement in common endeavours. The Congress party was in power at the Centre and in the states. The leadership shared a common outlook and where there were differences, as there undoubtedly were, they strove to keep them within manageable limits. This is particularly true of the period when Sardar Patel was the Deputy Prime Minister. The greater part of Nehru's tenure as Prime Minister covered a period largely devoted to the formation of the State, the laying down of the institutional framework for economic and social development, and the creation of a co-operative federal structure. On these basics there was an agreement not merely in the ruling Congress party but in the country as a whole. There were, of course, differences in certain policies and ideological nuances but these differences were submerged under an overall consensus.

Jawaharlal Nehru's stature as national leader and hero, his liberal outlook, intellectual eminence, and habit of publicly discussing policy options, coupled with the early demise of senior colleagues like Sardar Patel and the parting of the ways with C. Rajagopalachari, served to aid the first Prime Minister's political ascendancy and invested the Nehruvian consensus with vast moral authority, even though the consensus was the outgrowth of compromises

and adjustments hammered out over long years.⁸ Indeed some elements of this consensus, such as planning as an instrument of economic change, had been accepted even before Independence. These circumstances enabled Nehru to operate the prime-ministerial system smoothly with the help of a relatively small office whose activities were more restricted and less visible.⁹

With Nehru's departure the situation changed. Lal Bahadur Shastri lacked Nehru's charisma. As Prime Minister he was indeed "first among equals". To establish himself, and to make up for his comparative lack of familiarity with issues involving foreign policy, science and technology, he instinctively felt the need for a stronger office and appointed a full-fledged Secretary-level civil servant, L.K.Jha, to head his office with consequent increase in its size.¹⁰ It is interesting to note that the upgradation of PMO in India had been preceded in the same year in Great Britain by a similar process.¹¹ Whether the British example inspired the Indian Prime Minister is not known but it certainly must have helped him to allay the fears of his more suspicious colleagues and civil servants. Lal Bahadur's tenure was too brief for him to evolve a prime-ministerial system. That task was left to Indira Gandhi.

The assumption of the Prime Minister's office by Mrs. Gandhi was accompanied by significant changes in the economic and political environment. The leadership of the Congress party had become weak and fragmented. The country was hit by two droughts in a row. The economy was in a state of crisis; economic plans had decelerated to what was called a "plan holiday". The devaluation of the rupee, a decision taken earlier but implemented in the first months of her regime, turned out to be a major political fiasco without doing much good to the economy. The authority of the Central government had considerably eroded. Mrs. Gandhi's cabinet did not consist of like-minded persons. Few cabinets do but hers at that time was a coalition of widely ranging political views if not ideologies. The ideas articula-

ted then ranged from search for a nuclear umbrella and massive economic aid all the way to complete socialisation of means of production as a cure for all problems. These political weaknesses raised serious doubts in India and abroad about India's ability to cope simultaneously with the demands of national security, political independence and economic development.

The new Prime Minister faced a two-fold challenge. The first was to establish her pre-eminence in the cabinet and the second to forge a coherent set of policies and develop a credible political stance. To meet these challenges the Prime Minister could not depend solely on cabinet colleagues. Some of them were her political rivals who believed that as a Prime Minister on probation she should abide by the judgment of party elders. She also needed aides who were not her colleagues and who could give her professional assistance and advice. The presidential aides play such a role in the United States. In Great Britain senior civil servants play a similar role though in a lower key which makes it look somewhat ambiguous. The Permanent Under-Secretary is supposed to administer policies but the line that separates administration of policy from advice on policies is a thin one.

Presidential aides in the USA are more activist than British civil servants. Richard Neustadt, a U.S. presidential adviser, was once asked by a British Treasury official, "Why are your officials so passionate?" Neustadt turned the question around, asking why British civil servants are so dispassionate about the outcome of their activities. He concludes that U.S. civil servants care about policies because their careers are wrapped up with the success of their departments and, even more, their reputations for getting things done.¹²

In the circumstances prevailing in the country, Mrs. Gandhi did not need dispassionate, on-the-one-hand-and-on-the-other type of aides. She had to be an activist to be a successful Prime Minister. For that she needed a one-handed Secretary to head her office which would provide the

necessary inputs for such a role. This was undertaken by the PMO during the critical years of 1967-1971, under the leadership of P.N. Haksar who perceived the prevailing political tensions as aspects of the more basic economic and social changes. He reorganised the work of the office and raised its calibre and potential for assistance and advice. This was the formative period of the PMO as we know it today. Since then it has expanded further but its basic structure has remained essentially the same though its functions have been somewhat more variable.¹³ This is remarkable considering the fact that the Office has since seen three more Prime Ministers and five Secretaries. Morarji Desai declared that he would divest it of its "excessive power" and make it a small unit. All that he succeeded in doing was to change its name from Secretariat to Office and reduce the staff marginally from 229 to 211. His 'failure' was not the result of any bureaucratic resistance but a recognition that it was necessary to have a group of aides who would assist the Prime Minister in discharging his multifarious tasks.

It has been noted that the Prime Minister's tasks as the executive head of government fall into three main clusters: initiation, co-ordination and monitoring of policies. As leader of the party he is required to direct it in Parliament and in the field. In both capacities he has to be in touch with and responsive to public opinion. The PMO assists the Prime Minister in his capacity as the head of the government. The party expresses its policy preferences in broad terms at election time in the form of manifestos but it is the Prime Minister's task to convert them into concrete policies, adjust them to the prevailing circumstances, and implement them through the administration. It is in this field that the PMO plays a crucial though intangible role.

The PMO is sometimes described as a "think-tank". It is not. But it certainly does assemble ideas on policies from other parts of the system and even from sources available outside the system. This is not to say that the PMO does not generate ideas on its own. It does but more often it is a

transmission belt for ideas which constitute part of the inputs that go into policy formulation. There is no defined, stereotyped manner in which this takes place. The same can be said about 'advice'. The advisory role of the senior officers is known and recognised but sometimes the draftsman of a so-called routine letter or statement for the Prime Minister may in fact be playing an advisory role. At the same time, it is an exaggeration to assert that the PMO's advice always prevails. For example, the government's decision to take over wholesale wheat trade in 1973 was against the advice of the PMO. The decision, as is well known, was mooted by the Planning Commission and supported by the working committee of the Congress party.

The PMO works in different ways under different Prime Ministers and Secretaries depending on their individual styles and the degree of collaboration with the Cabinet Secretary and the ministries. But it is most productive when it is able to mobilise its resources in conjunction with those available elsewhere in the system. Thus the efficiency of the PMO is to be judged not merely in terms of its own performance but even more in terms of its contribution to the galvanisation of the entire secretariat for better performance. If it functions in a manner that curbs initiative or lowers morale elsewhere in the system, then it will be weakening instead of strengthening the hands of the Prime Minister.

What is true of policy formulation and co-ordination where it liaises with other ministries directly and through the Cabinet Secretary is even more true in the case of implementation and monitoring of policies at the Centre and in the states.

While the great part of interministerial co-ordination is done, and will continue to be done, by the Cabinet Secretariat, there are always issues and areas which a Prime Minister chooses for exercising personal monitoring. Bank nationalisation, Bangladesh, the anti-inflation packages of 1974 and the 20-Point Programme are major examples. Nor should it be forgotten that departments like Atomic Energy

and Electronics were from the very beginning under direct supervision of the Prime Minister, entailing staff support from the PMO. In these days of summit diplomacy it is sometimes necessary for the Prime Minister to send officials from his own secretariat for discussions in foreign capitals.

So much for the concept and the system on which the PMO is based. How any system actually works depends on temperament, capacities and motivations of the individuals involved and their mutual relationships. The human factor is of much greater significance in the PMO as it is here that the "buck stops". Of crucial importance in this context is the extent of rapport between the Prime Minister and his Secretary and the Secretary's relations with his colleagues.

P.N. Haksar enjoyed the Prime Minister's confidence. With his warm personality and his wide-ranging intellectual interests he was able to relate to colleagues of different backgrounds, interests and specialisations. He had his ideological preferences and he held them strongly but he also displayed ability and willingness to understand the other person's point of view. Under his influence his colleagues imbibed an *esprit de corps* rare in government offices. These qualities enabled him to be an effective team leader and an outstandingly successful aide to his Prime Minister.

To conclude, the PMO is a team with the Secretary or, as in Haksar's unique case, Principal Secretary as chief of the staff. It works best when it works as a team as has been demonstrated in critical situations which needed careful, constant and concentrated attention. In the final analysis, however, one has to agree with Harold Wilson who said, "the office of the Prime Minister is what its holder chooses and is able to make it".

REFERENCES

1. A more sober version of such an opinion was expressed recently in an editorial comment by *The Times of India* in its issue of 27.6.1988

thus: "The appointment of Mrs. Sheila Dixit as a Minister of State attached to the burgeoning Prime Minister's Office shows the growing importance that is being placed on centralising and coordinating political and administrative initiatives. This is a dangerous trend which needs to be carefully reviewed. The PMO is threatening to become a parallel centre of power at the cost of the institution of the cabinet. It can get out of control and affect the morale and efficiency of other ministries."

2. *British Prime Ministers in the Twentieth Century*, 2 Volumes, edited by John P. Mackintosh, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980.
3. There has been no scholarly academic work on the subject. A couple of doctoral theses I have seen do no justice to the subject. See, for example, Sarla Malik, *The Prime Minister of India: Powers and Functions*, Chinta Prakashan, Pilani, 1984, and L.N. Sharma, *The Indian Prime Minister: Office and Powers*, Macmillan, New Delhi, 1976.
4. R.H.S. Crossman in his introduction to Walter Bagehot, *The English Constitution*, London, Fontana Library, 1965, p. 35.
5. Collin Seymore-Ure: The "disintegration" of the cabinet quoted by Richard Rose in *Politics in England*, Faber and Faber, London, 1980.
6. R.H.S. Crossman, op. cit., p. 53.
7. As quoted by John Mackintosh, op. cit.
8. Even Nehru had sometimes to assert himself formally as he did at the time of C.D. Deshmukh's resignation in 1956 when he said, "I am the Prime Minister of India, and the Prime Minister is Prime Minister. He can lay down the policy of the government."
9. The Prime Minister's Office under Nehru was usually headed by an officer of the rank of Joint Secretary. However, it might be added that he was his own foreign minister and had the assistance of a number of senior civil servants in matters dealing with security which fall within the Prime Minister's purview.
10. The number of staff members of all categories in the PMO increased from 117 in 1949 to 198 in 1965.
11. "Since 1965, successive PMs have had one or more personal policy advisers in Downing Street to supplement a handful of civil service advisers...." See Richard Rose, op. cit.
12. Richard E. Neustadt, "White House and Whitehall" in Richard Rose (Editor), *Policy Making in Britain*, p. 292.
13. On January 1, 1988, the staff strength of the PMO was 388.

DWARKA NATH CHATTERJEE

Haksar and India's Foreign Policy

Presenting a pen picture of a close friend and colleague of many years, in the context of foreign policy or otherwise, is a hazardous task. One is lucky if the focus is only hazy without the profile being distorted. However close the association, the whole persona of a friend can never be known. My imperfect sketch is inspired mainly by remembrance of past discussions, observation of his style in dealing with men and matters and also by the comments of his admirers (he has a number) and critics (quite a few).

The international scene of today has evolved from the immediate post-war period when P.N. Haksar (from now on I shall refer to him as PNH as he signs in his letters to me) and his generation of diplomats and politicians assumed an active role. The imperatives of those days demanded an emphasis on certain aspects of foreign policy which has now lost its urgency. We live today in an age of the atom, spreading environmental pollution and worldwide instability. T.S. Eliot may well say: "We live by the light of the lightning." The scale of danger to the security of mankind is now global. The stately lies which certain politicians and diplomats were, and are still, in the habit of

deploying in the service of national ego and power, are now irrelevant, indeed dangerous, both in terms of aims and the method of achieving them.

If humanity has progressed in the area of science, it seems to have regressed as regards enlightened humanism. Resurgent religiosity is generating mindless conflicts even in regions considered to be highly civilised. The convergence of technological power, religious intolerance, racial arrogance and political opportunism is creating problems which seem to invalidate the traditional formulas of foreign policy. Terrorism — the warfare of the weak — has always existed in various forms but now it is sharpened by the latest tools of technology and its territory is expanding. Foreign policy of today must devise new diplomatic means to counter this menace.

To the best of my knowledge PNH has been, and is, acutely conscious of these trends whether nascent or manifest. An analysis of the totality of his views and actions in this context is beyond the scope of this short essay. I shall only shine the torch on some, I hope revealing, features of his attitude to foreign policy and technique in diplomacy. Predictably, he has aroused antagonism in some influential people at home and abroad because his "values" threatened theirs. The late American columnist Joseph Alsop had chided PNH in somewhat snarling prose because of the latter's perceived lack of devotion to the American concept of "The Free World". The occasion for the reproof had arisen when PNH was with the Indian delegation in Korea. I was reassured when I read Alsop's column. Apart from the outright critics and those who shared his ideas, there were some well-known figures who were intrigued by PNH. The former French Prime Minister, Pierre Mendès-France, was one of them.

Mendès-France in his book, *Dialogues avec l'Asie d'Aujourd'hui*, compares PNH with Henry Kissinger. He notes a remarkable resemblance between the two — even in physical characteristics — though he grants that "Haksar is taller

and, unlike Kissinger, exudes a sense of power" (*dégage une sorte de puissance qui n'apparaît pas chez Kissinger*). In respect of the psychological similarity between the two, Mendès-France mentions Haksar's "*tempérament de philosophe ou sociologue*" which apparently came through during their talks in Delhi in 1972, reminding him of Kissinger's conceptual approach to foreign policy. The French statesman listened to PNH with apparent reservations as the latter explained the situation in the newly liberated Bangladesh, as well as in India, neither with pessimism nor with rancour against Pakistan or China. Mendès-France was friendly to India and an acute observer, but perhaps he was in a better position to understand an American power broker, like Kissinger, rather than PNH who did not quite fit into the normal Western framework of reference.

Kissinger's "conceptual approach" is deeply rooted in realpolitik. He came to America as an adolescent Jewish refugee from Hitler's Germany. It is not surprising that his transition from extreme weakness early in life to a position of security and influence later had conditioned his psyche and that, consequently, he had adopted and embraced American power rather than the Jeffersonian ideals. His attitude to the Greece of "the Colonels", to the convulsions in Cyprus and to the massacres in East Pakistan (1971), to mention only a few instances, shows a temperament reflecting a curious brand of "philosophy". In all these cases the advantages he seemed to seek were short-term at best. Very recently, he is reported to have advised the dominant right-wing elements in the Israeli government that "Israel should bar the media from entry into the occupied territories involved in the present demonstrations (of the Palestinians) and put down the insurrection as quickly as possible — overwhelmingly, brutally and rapidly" (*International Herald Tribune* 8 March, 1988). The "Haksar-Kissinger" equation that Mendès-France mentions is misleading. Once when these two had met in New Delhi there was a hint of

duel in their dialogue. It could not be otherwise. There was mistrust rather than “meeting of minds” between them.

The background and formative years of PNH were very different. His generation was involved often actively in the vast nationalist upheaval in India, with its surges of idealism, which eventually culminated in Independence. Socially secure, ideologically motivated and politically active since early youth, PNH had no “hang-up” of any kind. The freedom movement in India transcended mere political goals and merged into a general reform movement. The leaders of the Indian independence movement were guided in varying degrees by social conscience and high ideals, even if they fell short of attaining them. The generation of PNH grew up in a kind of exhilarating turmoil and then saw with sorrow that the price of independence was the division of old India along broadly religious lines. Ideals were thus tempered by something akin to wariness and there was a feeling, right or wrong, that the ruling power had set the stage carefully over the past several decades to detach what it considered to be the “loyal part” of the Indian population from the nationalists before abdicating.

When freedom came, it was heralded by immense violence, but there was no “Revolution”. The political and administrative classes remained basically the same. And what did they see? They saw that though the traditional predatory powers were exhausted by the second world war, their taste for power play was not lost. They saw that the “United Nations Organisation” tended to be used as a cover for neo-imperialism. They saw that though the power centres had shifted, the lurking threat to India's newly won independence remained in a new guise. The suffocating embrace of condescending “friends” was as much to be feared as open enmity. They had seen the perversion of religious sentiments and knew from first-hand experience that politics and religion made an explosive mixture.

This generation had straddled a great divide in our nation's history. The intellectual baggage carried over from

the past contained lessons from harsh experience. In the new environment, it was the voice of Jawaharlal Nehru, rather than of Mahatma Gandhi, which rang out clear. The saint had died a martyr after his task was done; it was the statesman's turn and, fittingly, Jawaharlal Nehru had a wide knowledge of international affairs and was also a humanist and a secular democrat.

PNH is his disciple. When he sits in his library at his Delhi residence, he faces directly a particularly sensitive portrait of Nehru. It was Nehru who had brought him from the bar to the newly constituted Foreign Service. As far as I know, PNH found it easy to admire and follow Nehru because, like some other kindred souls, he shared in the main Nehru's ideas and ideals. But if Nehru was his mentor, PNH never was an unquestioning pupil. While I considered Nehru to be something of a Fabian socialist who also sought a synthesis between his intellectual humanism and the spiritual legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, I found PNH, in the early 1950s, to be more radical than his mentor. He was at the time a diplomat of middle rank without any constitutional power to formulate policy but, as he had considerable persuasive powers allied to a strong personality, it would be rash to assert that he had no role in shaping the details within the perimeter of Nehru's foreign policy, designed mainly to preserve India from being a satellite of great powers, whether benign or otherwise. Another important ingredient of Nehru's policy was to hasten the process of decolonisation, resulting from the weakness of the traditional colonial powers. The principle of an independent foreign policy is admirable, but in practice many compromises have to be made, and in that context the "accent" one puts on the execution of policy is a reflection of the ideology and the political perception of the person concerned. To the extent possible the counsels of PNH conformed to the essential tenets of Nehru's policy.

John Kennedy had referred to the "soaring idealism" of Nehru in his inaugural address in 1961. However, the

realities of international relations had taught Nehru that “Asian” countries could also be disappointingly imperialistic; that it was futile to seek justice and fairplay at the United Nations and that the populist form of democracy — often expressed in plebiscites — justified the classic mistrust of Aristotle.

The ideas and purposes of Nehru’s generation evolved to harmonise with the compelling factors of the post-war world where the “candlelight imperialism” of the past had ceded place to a new form of domination symbolised by the two power blocs. Nehru had sought to maintain India’s non-alignment with moral force rather than military or economic strength. It is true that the real process of industrialisation of India which began during the war was significantly accelerated only after independence, mainly because of Nehru’s vision. But it is also true that Nehru tended to avert his eyes from the positive and even liberating role of military might, no doubt because, as he had once said, of his “passion for peace”. In Kashmir he was obliged to use force because he had no other option, but his ambivalent attitude to the Hyderabad operation and to the invasion of Goa reflected his instinctive aversion to even a mild form of necessary realpolitik. The eventual betrayal by China gave the grand old patriot a lethal lesson, hastening his death.

PNH was a mature intellectual product of an environment when the influence of Gandhiji’s message of mysticism and non-violence had waned and the pressing problems and prospects of India were mainly material. PNH revered Gandhiji, but not as a devotee. I remember listening to a conversation in the mid-1970s between PNH and a person of political experience and stature, during which PNH expressed his dismay at the expanding role of “money power” during elections and mentioned that Gandhiji’s method of raising funds on a very broad popular basis was vastly preferable. However, the world view of PNH was not shaped by Gandhiji. As for Nehru, his “*guru*”, PNH differed from him in his greater understanding of the function of

force in international relations. During the period I had served with him in London during the 1950s, his comments on the military tactics and the related political goals of Mao Tse-tung struck me as being informed and valid. He had also encouraged me to study parts of Clausewitz's famous book, *On War*. He had evidently done so. He is well aware of the dictum, "War is continuation of policy by other means", and draws the necessary conclusions. Mendès-France had observed that PNH, in his exposition of India's posture on various international issues, cited both Clausewitz and Rousseau. Perhaps the mention of Clausewitz had suggested to the French statesman that PNH was the Indian counterpart of Kissinger, but the question remains: Would Kissinger have cited Rousseau also?

The experience gained in the late 1940s and in the 1950s, integrated with his intellectual and political perception, prepared PNH for the exercise of real power as adviser to the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. In some ways she had similar ideas on foreign policy and the role of military might in it. Their association in confronting the problems facing India during the late 1960s and the early 1970s proved to be constructive and purposeful. The world had changed — and was changing fast — since the immediate post-war years when two almost monolithic power blocs, each glaring at the other, had dominated the international scene. By the middle of the 1960s, the existing cracks in the "blocs" had widened. Ideology was no longer the cement of alliances as it was earlier assumed to be. Decolonised countries were becoming more assertive, more demanding, though some of them were willing to barter away the substance of newly won freedom for what is known as "Foreign Aid". Providing military bases to a superpower was thought to be a very rewarding exercise — especially for the leaders of the countries concerned. "Power" itself was changing its connotation. PNH was sent to Korea as a political adviser to the Indian delegation during the armistice negotiations in the early 1950s. That experience must have been instructive

as the limitations of a “superpower” were revealed for the first time — though not for the last. There was also an ominous echo of the Korean conflict when General MacArthur proposed going “nuclear” to counter the manpower of China. Though President Truman, the first man to use atom bombs on live targets, rebuffed MacArthur, all concerned realised that a new menace, a new order of violence, had appeared, because if atomic weapons were used, the victims would not be confined only to the belligerent countries. The lesson was two-fold: the importance of avoiding a major war; and the necessity for India to accelerate its scientific and technological growth. My conversations with PNH after his return from Korea gave me an insight into his thinking of that time.

As Secretary and Adviser to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, PNH had certainly tried with some success to reduce the number of India's enemies. This eminently sensible goal of diplomacy requires some special qualities which PNH possesses to a considerable degree. Intimidation, corruption, subversion and ideological pressure are a few of the means used by ambitious practitioners of *realpolitik*. They pride themselves on their pragmatism and they shelter behind the well-worn doctrine that there are no permanent friends nor permanent enemies, there are only permanent interests. They do not always realise that the nature of “interests” changes and that in the evolving situation of the present-day world the recognition of the true interests of a nation is essential. Once it is understood, then diplomacy takes its turn. PNH has known this — as long as I have known him — and let us not forget that diplomacy is not some abstract principle, but it is foreign policy in operation.

I was in the Congo (now Zaire) when PNH was serving in Nigeria as High Commissioner. His term there was remarkably successful from all accounts, not only because he took the trouble to study deeply the issues and personalities, but also because he developed a genuinely sympathetic attitude towards the Nigerian people. He often used the term

“compassion” — without any patronising overtones — when discussing with me what should be our attitude to the African peoples. He favoured giving “aid” as and when necessary but without that all too common overpowering abundance with ulterior motives, which tended to submerge a fledgling state. The objective vis-à-vis such countries must never be to destroy their self-esteem by buying their loyalty, nor to be inextricably involved with some plausible leaders. The executive arm of foreign policy must practise diplomacy in depth, maintaining touch with the potential successors of the existing ruling elites and also establishing contact with the rising generation of the intelligentsia. This approach is particularly appropriate for Africa.

PNH knows, like all wise observers of the international scene, that the methods of implementing a given foreign policy vary according to circumstances. The technique which may work in, say, the United Kingdom, is likely to fail in a totalitarian state. In some places it is wiser to welcome defeat in debate while achieving surreptitious victory just through amiable persuasion. In each case, however, it is useful to establish a personal rapport with the interlocutor, even in a situation of adversary relationship. PNH is a master of this technique which becomes all the more effective in his hands as his integrity and credibility are beyond question. When I was serving as Deputy High Commissioner (in the middle 1950s) in Pakistan, there were occasions of heightened tension during one of which PNH visited us, though not on any ostensible political mission. I had then observed how effortlessly he could transform a somewhat sullen crowd of Pakistanis into a reasonably receptive gathering of interested — even smiling — people. The contents of his little speeches, made in chaste Urdu, were enlivened by flashes of poetry which, alas!, I could not understand. However, PNH left behind him a goodwill from which I was glad to profit.

After the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, one of the pressing problems for the Pakistanis was to secure without

delay the release of about 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war in Indian custody. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and PNH, her close adviser in those days, displayed statesmanship of high order. India was careful not to humiliate a vanquished Pakistan in the Simla Agreement. Subsequently PNH negotiated, as the special representative of the Prime Minister, with the Pakistani minister of state for defence and foreign affairs, Mr. Aziz Ahmed, the repatriation of the prisoners of war. I happen to know of the hard and proud character of the Pakistani minister, who must have been particularly bitter and touchy after the Pakistani debacle. To my pleasant surprise PNH concluded the talks in Rawalpindi and Delhi with a satisfactory accord, without offending Aziz Ahmed and his team in any way. I have seen some photographs in this connection, showing both Aziz Ahmed and PNH in a highly jubilant and fraternal mood.

Discretion is one of the indispensable qualities a diplomat must have. PNH was a professional diplomat in the Foreign Service, and though later he rose virtually to cabinet rank with other responsibilities, some particularly delicate diplomatic tasks continued to be entrusted to him. Negotiations with Aziz Ahmed had required a certain style which was employed with success. However, in the autumn of 1973 PNH was called upon to undertake a very important mission abroad, in which discretion, credibility, integrity and diplomatic finesse of the highest order were needed. PNH successfully fulfilled his mission. Discretion forbids me to add anything more. . . .

It is interesting to contrast this indulgent attitude of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and PNH to a defeated Pakistan with their grim, resolute mood, once they had realised that the extent and rigour of West Pakistani repression in what now is Bangladesh, was not only barbaric *per se*, but that it also posed a grave threat to the security and stability of India. The Revolutionary China of Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai remained unmoved by the atrocities the military dictatorship of Pakistan committed against the Bengalis. The

Great Capitalist Democracy of America, guided by President Nixon and the future Nobel laureate for Peace, Kissinger, remained an understanding patron of the Pakistani dictator. Other major countries were interested observers, but they found no reason to intervene. Some Muslim countries had more sympathy for the marauding West Pakistanis than for their Muslim Bengali victims. Meanwhile millions of refugees streamed into Calcutta in an endless flow. After the partition of India in 1947, countless thousands of refugees had been coming from East Pakistan and Calcutta has never recovered from the strain they imposed on an overpopulated, volatile city. This new massive exodus from East Pakistan in 1971 generated great anxiety and also anger. India had to do something. There was clamour for immediate military action. I remember that even Jayaprakash Narayan, who was my guest in Paris in that tense summer of 1971, was in favour of invasion. Unofficial reports from Delhi indicated that even some of our generals — with the notable exception of General (later Field Marshal) Manekshaw — wanted to march into East Pakistan without delay. The political pressure on the Prime Minister for a muscular intervention was mounting dangerously.

However, our Prime Minister had a tight little circle of cool-headed advisers in which, to the best of my knowledge, Haksar was particularly influential. They appraised the situation realistically. At the superpower level, China was inimical. America under Nixon was equally so, even though Kissinger did his best to mislead our Foreign Office. In July 1971 I had learnt, for instance, that Kissinger had assured Foreign Secretary T.N. Kaul that he would “talk Nixon out of supporting Yahya Khan” adding that Pakistan was of “marginal interest to the USA”. He had also stated that not only was India a stable democracy, but it was also a power capable of “taking on single-handed not only Pakistan but also China”. All these remarkable statements, made to beguile India as a prelude to Nixon’s diplomatic coup vis-à-vis China, damaged Kissinger’s credibility, without

deceiving PNH and his colleagues.

China and America were in the hostile camp and the European powers were non-committal, even if they deplored the massacres in East Pakistan. On 14 July, 1971 President Pompidou had said to me: "France is for peace", while talking about the situation in East Pakistan. I had responded with disarming candour: "France is also for justice". He did not disagree. It was obvious that Pakistan was sheltered by legality and that an Indian invasion of East Pakistan would invite international condemnation. Besides, military operations in East Pakistan were likely to bog down unless undertaken in the dry season. As it became increasingly clear that eventually India would have to resort to force, PNH took the lead in helping the Prime Minister to resist pressure for premature military action, while fortifying the diplomatic position of India in the event of war. The first act was to reinforce our links with the Soviet Union (the 20-year Friendship Treaty of August 1971) — and then followed the visits of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, accompanied by PNH and Foreign Secretary T.N. Kaul, to the major European countries and Washington. Nixon was not won over, but the international climate was not hostile when India marched into East Pakistan in December of 1971, to make it the independent State of Bangladesh. One may say that in this case PNH had evoked both Clausewitz and Rousseau!

The glimpses given above of PNH in his role of formulating and implementing the foreign policy of India, under the Prime Minister, obviously provide an inadequate insight into his overall thinking.

In most major countries the internal situations mingle with external conditions, making it impracticable to separate foreign policy completely from domestic considerations. The religious, ethnic and cultural affinities of the populations of our neighbouring countries, with large sections of Indians, must always influence our policies towards them. "Independent foreign policy" is really a

complex of necessary compromises. There are also other conditions which must shape our foreign policy.

India is no longer an infant State born in turmoil, as it was in 1947, with moral force as its principal defence. It is today a powerful country, judging by military-economic parameters, but it is not yet powerful enough in terms of its size and geographical situation. Certain precepts should govern its foreign policy in the existing circumstances.

There are at present two established superpowers and one "candidate superpower". This one is our immediate neighbour and pretends to have claims against us. The late Chinese Prime Minister, Chou En-lai, had told Pierre Mendès-France in December 1971 that India was an "imperialist country", adding, in the context of the uprising in East Pakistan, that the minorities in India — Sikhs, Tamils, Kashmiris, etc. — threaten the unity of India. It would be an exaggeration to state that China can be relied on as a friend. India should neither provoke nor appease China. We should be friendly to the other two superpowers — to the extent possible — without being a follower of either. Strategic considerations and past experience suggest that we maintain our existing relationship with the Soviet Union.

As we resist pressure, if any, from the superpowers, so must we refuse to be dragged into adventures by smaller countries or ethnic groups who may seek our protection. A measure of such protection may be extended only in exceptional circumstances involving India's security.

The secular character of our democracy must be upheld, not only because it is rational, but also because of the impact of our domestic policies on the foreign co-religionists of our minority groups.

Our import policy regarding military or industrial hardware must always be oriented to the achievement of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. Our foreign or domestic policy must never be mortgaged to foreign donors, however tempting the terms they offer.

It goes without saying that we have to maintain stable and

friendly relations with our immediate neighbours, a difficult and delicate task which requires great patience, a certain amount of generosity and also the projection of a strong image of India. We need not flex our muscles, but no harm in others knowing that we have them.

Above all, India, like all sane countries, must strive for world peace, as the alternative is too horrifying to contemplate. However, the principal responsibility in this connection does not rest on us.

I have not stated anything startlingly new, nor do I believe that PNH disagrees.

Ask him!

B.P.R. VITHAL

New Approaches to Planning: a critical assessment

There is a group of intellectuals in the country which has been moulded in its thinking and attitudes by Haksar. Its intellectual edifice is built on diverse foundations, some of Marxist origin, some Freudian, some derived from the Bertrand Russell of the 1930s and some from the Sartre of the 1950s, but all transplanted into the native soil of the Nehruvian approach. Gandhi did not originally fit into this picture; he was more a phenomenon to be understood than a basis for any intellectual conviction. It is only later, with the rise of Martin Luther King and the realisation of "Small being Beautiful", that this group started re-examining Gandhi as a source of any serious contribution to its intellectual ethos.

This is a group, or a genre, not a generation because it cuts across several age and professional groups. Its most creative period was when Haksar was in the centre of policy making and plan formulation. Today this genre is dispirited, though not yet demoralised. It is a genre of fallen idols, not failed

ideals. It is confused, but has not yet lost conviction. Its innocence is drowned but it is not cynical. It has lost courage but not yet hope. It cries out, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" But it clings to the hope that "some revelation is at hand; surely the Second Coming is at hand". At a juncture like this it misses the assurance of relevance that Haksar once provided it.

Central to this confusion is the loss of influence of this group in economic policy formulation. As Mohit Sen has put it in the course of a review of Sukhamoy Chakravarty's book, "it is this strategy [the strategy of the approach document of the Fifth Plan, of which Chakravarty and Haksar were the architects according to Sen — BPRV] that has been sidelined to the detriment of the country. It is a strategy to which a return should be made. But it will not be made without considerable and skilful struggle".¹ This book of Chakravarty has been an important defence of the policies that had been adopted in the past under the influence of this group, of which Chakravarty himself is a distinguished member. However, this approach has come under severe attack from another equally distinguished economic theoretician who does not belong to this group, namely, Jagdish Bhagwati. In the same review Sen comments that "The conclusion that we live in India, which is more dual and more polarised than four decades ago, requires more examination. It may be that the middle ground has expanded and that we have become more petit-bourgeois than before, along with the growth of capitalist oligopolies and agrarian capitalism and the expansion of the working class broadly understood."²

There is an assumption here that the economy being more dual is either synonymous with or consequential to its being more polarised. This need not be so. Growing polarisation can be consistent with a relative growth of the middle ground also. In the West, the evolution of the middle class from the dregs of the rich and the cream of the workers gave new strength to capitalism. In our society, however, the so-

called middle class is still so small, that it is middle only in the sense of being between the rich and the poor and is not broad enough to serve the purpose of a buffer, which it does in the West. Be that as it may, those who contend that we are moving towards a strategy of planning based on a dual economy do not base their contention merely on the premise that the economy has become more polarised.³

The dual economy approach is based on a different appreciation not of the class structure, or differentiation of our society, but of the objectives of those who hold economic power and who therefore have the power of economic decision making in our society. This class may be characterised as the “bourgeoisie and landlord, led by the big bourgeoisie” or as the capitalist oligopolies in collaboration with agricultural capitalism, as Sen puts it. The ruling class can also be broadly described as being composed of the rural rich, big business and bureaucracy. It is this combination that found the Nehruvian concept of socialism useful for building its own base for political and economic power. For the rural rich, it kept socialism away from rural areas. For big business, it confined the public sector to areas that they were, as yet, afraid to tread and, for the bureaucracy, it gave a fresh domain for exercising its own power. Even then there was no real class basis, in the true Marxist sense, for socialism.

During the last few years a new generation has arisen within this class. The sons of the rural rich have now become professionals or Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). The younger generation in the big business have also been professionalised and have become more typically entrepreneurial than the earlier generation. The new decision making class, therefore, consists of this generation and the result has been that professionals have tended to replace the bureaucracy within this group. This does not change either the nature of this class, or its basic class interests, but it certainly affects its perceptions of how those interests are to be served in the changed objective

circumstances. Like Sen, they also seem to have taken note of the fact that there has been a growth of the “middle ground”. They have been shrewd enough to perceive in this the possibilities of a new market and a new ally. The strategy based on a dual economy model arises out of this perception.

If the primary objective of planned development were to be a direct attack on poverty, production would have to be oriented towards wage goods. On the other hand, if the middle ground has expanded, we have here a new market for our production machine. The middle ground may not be large in a relative sense but, given the magnitude of our numbers, even if we put this at about 10 per cent we would have a market of about 80 million people. The dual economy approach is based on an appreciation of the fact that gearing production to the kind of demand generated by this group would prove more profitable for the ruling class than orienting it to the wage goods model. In arousing and in satisfying the needs of this middle class the big bourgeoisie would have maximised its own profits and would have, in the process, gained the support of the vocal sections of our society. A sullen and beleaguered middle class would be the recruiting ground for proletarian revolutionaries. A titillated and beguiled class can be a market for the capitalist oligopolies. At one stroke they would have acquired a market and deprived the poor of potential leadership.

However, this still leaves the inconvenient question of how the basic needs of the remaining 700 million would be met. A majority of the poor would be in the rural sector. Some provision would, therefore, necessarily have to be made in the economic model for the satisfaction of the minimum needs of the masses. The main difference between this model and the earlier Mahalanobis-Pant-Chakravarty-Haksar model would be that, while in that model poverty eradication was an “independent objective”, in this model it would be a subsidiary objective.

There are three serious problems for this model. Firstly, there is the problem of achieving a suitable, yet realistic,

balance between these two objectives. Given the constraint of national physical resources the question arises if it would be possible, in a concrete sense, to evolve a model which would provide for the basic needs of the poor who are the majority and also satisfy the new basket of demands of, what may be called, the “durable consumer market” of the middle class. Those who advocate the trickle-down theory assert that, with a 7 per cent overall rate of growth, both these objectives can be achieved in a mutually consistent manner. A somewhat similar assumption was there in the approach document for the Fifth Plan, when it was assumed that a high rate of growth of 6.5 per cent of the GDP could help achieve a minimum level of living for the poor without reducing the consumption level of the first three deciles of the population. There is, however, a crucial difference. In this case the primary target is the achievement of a minimum level of living for the poor while the constraint is the non-reduction in the level of consumption of the top three deciles. On the other hand, in the dual economy strategy, satisfaction of the demands of the middle group would be the primary target, while raising the level of living of the poor, to some extent at least, would be the constraint on this. The trade-off would express itself in the level up to which the living standards of the poor can be raised. The constraint on the dual economy strategy will not be an ideological one but one of physical resources.

The second problem of this model is that there is an internal contradiction within the ruling class itself. While some would like to maximise their profits by accelerating growth by orienting it towards the market available as a result of the rise of the middle class, others find a more profitable market in export-oriented growth. This latter section doubts the demand capacity of the internal middle class market. They are afraid that if they make heavy investments based on an optimistic estimation of this market they may be disappointed. They would, therefore, like to supplement this with an exit into the foreign market. A

concomitant of this would be larger imports and a larger inflow of foreign capital. This approach is sought to be justified on the ground that foreign competition is necessary for improvement of the quality of production as also for a decrease in prices.

This contradiction within the ruling class has other implications also for plan strategy. The former of these strategies would accept the other goal of our economic planning so far, namely, self-reliance, whereas the latter would attach little importance to this objective in the changed context of international economic relations. As one young foreign-trained economist working in the Planning Commission put it in a discussion, the fear of foreign investment is a hobgoblin of the older generation that has not overcome its memories of the East India Company. The younger generation, like him, which has shown its mettle in competing with foreigners in the course of its education and career has no such hang-up and it is therefore confident that it can deal with the inflow of foreign investment without detriment to itself. For this way of thinking economic growth and efficiency are primary; national entities are only of secondary importance.

The third problem of this strategy would be that of employment. Economic production, geared either to the indigenous middle class demand or to the export market, has to be technologically modern and efficient if it is to be competitive. Investment in such production may not therefore generate employment of a magnitude that can solve the problem of unemployment that confronts us, given the rate of growth of our population and the age composition even of our present population. The dual economy model has therefore to take into account not merely the poverty of the majority of the population outside its restricted middle class target, but also of the problem of unemployment. Since the problem of unemployment cannot be solved within the modern sector of the economy because of the constraints mentioned above, it will have to be

relegated to the second sector, namely, the sector of the rural poor. Programmes will have to be devised for this sector that will generate employment and alleviate poverty by providing them wage goods. These two objectives are inter-related and therefore can be tackled jointly, but this need not necessarily be so as is the case in some populist schemes involving direct distribution of subsidised goods. Here again the problem will be one of physical balances. Given the numbers involved and the inefficiency of this type of production, would the overall resources be adequate to be able to deal with this set of problems, together with the kind of investment required, if the consumer demand of the modern type is to be satisfied, on the basis of a highly capital intensive production involving the latest technologies?

The failure of the previous strategies to achieve either the targeted rates of growth or the alleviation of poverty to any appreciable degree has put advocates of those models on the defensive. On the other hand, those who argue that the alleviation of poverty would be better achieved as a side effect of the acceleration in the rate of growth have, as of this moment, no previous failures to dispute their case, though we do have disastrous foreign examples particularly from South America. There are, however, other problems in this strategy. The rate of growth generally assumed to be necessary for the trickle-down to be effective is 7 per cent. A rate of growth of this magnitude will admittedly require greater inflow of foreign investment. We are assured that this would not lead us into a debt trap. We are also assured that in these days of multinationals, which in this line of thinking are not very distinguishable from the terms multilateral or international, there need not be much apprehension in regard to the political consequences of such foreign investment.

Even granting that a high rate of growth will lead to a high rate of trickle-down, will the differential between these two rates be so adjusted as to not lead to greater disparities in the process? Or is disparity an irrelevant consideration so

long as all levels are rising? On this issue a reference to an earlier comment on this aspect may now be relevant again. We have quoted Mohit Sen earlier to say that what we need to do now is to return to the strategy of the *Approach Document of the Fifth Plan*. That approach specifically mentioned the relative and absolute aspects of the concept of poverty. The present author had at that time discussed certain “philosophic aspects” of this in a paper published pseudonymously in the Annual Number of the *Economic and Political Weekly* in February, 1973. It may be of some interest to quote here the relevant portions of this discussion.

In the Approach to the Fifth Plan, the elimination of poverty is given the highest priority. In the earlier ‘Towards an Approach’, which we may for convenience refer to as the ‘approach to the approach’ document, the proposition is stated in the following clear terms:

Poverty is both an absolute and a relative concept. When we talk about the elimination of poverty as a goal of development; what we have in mind is not the relative concept but a definition of what could reasonably be considered as an absolute level of poverty.

The crucial point of this approach lies in its recognition of the relative and absolute aspects of poverty and in its concentration on the absolute aspect. Underlying this is a conscious or unconscious, albeit deep, understanding of the outlook and psychology of our people, steeped as it is in the philosophy of *karma*.

Relative poverty requires a horizontal comparison in the three dimensions of the present. On the other hand, *karma* links a man causally with his own past and future but not dialectically with his present surroundings. Each man is thus linked causally only to his own past and future and any interaction between two persons at any given point of time is in a sense fortuitous. Thus, if I kill

another person I am impelled to killing by my own *karma* and the other person is destined to die by his own *karma*. The fact that I am an instrument for the fulfilment of his *karma* is entirely fortuitous. It is this logic which is used even in the scriptures for condoning a number of rather doubtful actions on the part of otherwise eminent personalities. The Hindu mind will not, therefore, react to an increase in the prosperity of another person, and the consequent increase in disparities, in the manner Western logic would make us expect. The respective *karma* of the two persons explains the rewards some seem to get without merit and the unmerited stagnation of others and thus the resultant discrepancies. There are no unearned incomes in *karma*.

The comparison the Hindu mind makes is along the fourth dimension of time. A man compares his present condition with his own previous condition. In economic terminology, he is concerned with his own secular trends and not the Lorenz curve. Following this logic, *karma* should, strictly speaking, reconcile him to a decline in his own condition also. Traditionally this is what it was supposed to have done. However, it now appears doubtful whether *karma* has the resilience to reconcile a man to a declining secular trend in his own condition, although it does reconcile him to growing disparities when his own trend has also been rising. The crucial question therefore is how far and within what limits of stagnation, or decline in one's condition, will *karma* continue to serve its original purpose of reconciling a man to his condition.

It is in this context that the rate of growth we attempt also becomes significant. The rate of growth suggested for the Fifth Plan is 5.5 per cent. It was 5.7 per cent for the Fourth Plan and "close to" 6 per cent for the Third Plan. Thus, there appears to be something mystic about the 5 plus percentage. A superficial view of the matter could be that economic and econometric considerations leave us no other reasonable choice. But a little deeper analysis would

show that in fact this rate of growth meshes in ideally with the philosophic outlook explained above. A 5 plus per cent rate of growth would in per capita terms result in a 3 plus per cent rate of growth. The actual achievement despite these targets has been 3.7 to 3.8 per cent in the past two decades, which would give a growth of per capita income of roughly 1 plus per cent during this period. Thus, we have a situation where the rate of growth of per capita income varies between an actual of 1 per cent and a target of about 3 per cent. This range is not fortuitous. This is the range within which alone the Hindu view of life will hold.

At one time it was believed that the Hindu view of life had an answer to the problems of Western society and that, therefore, we could in this country achieve a synthesis of Western economic development and this view of life. What is not realised in this appreciation of the situation is that we have enough evidence to show that with high rates of growth the Hindu view of life breaks down in the Indian situation itself. Thus, those areas of our country or those sections of our population whose own condition has improved at a faster than 3-4 per cent rate of growth have not been protected by the Hindu outlook from the evils and temptations of the Western way of life. The older among them have already yielded to wife-swapping and the younger to delinquency and drugs. At the other extreme, we have the evidence of the effect of the Hindu view of life on those among the West who have embraced it of late. They are the dropouts in Western society who do not have any more faith in economic development and who have voluntarily brought down their own rate of growth to the permissible range. In fact, it is because the West is in a position where it has seriously to consider a zero rate of growth that the Hindu way of life is attractive to them. To the extent we ourselves achieve a faster rate we will find this outlook getting seriously distorted. The rate of growth chosen, therefore, is the one that ideally fits in

with the preservation of our traditions.

The real doubt is not about the upper extreme of this range but about the lower extreme. The general view used to be that the philosophy of *karma* renders a man immune not merely to slow growth in his own prosperity but to stagnation and even decline. It is doubtful whether this extreme view can now be sustained. Recent experience shows that in periods where there is a negative rate of growth it becomes difficult for people to be held by *karma* alone. In regard to the past also, it would be more reasonable to assume that the *karma* view of life really thrived when there was a positive but modest rate of growth. The climacteric changes in Hinduism and the weaning away of large numbers of people from it must have, therefore, occurred at periods of negative growth, or among sections of the people who were experiencing either negative rates of growth at one end or very high rates of growth at the other. Within the 0-3 per cent range of growth of per capita income, which the tradition can sustain, Bhakti cults and mystic Swamis abound at the lower ranges while Jnana Yogis and intellectual gurus would thrive at the upper ranges.⁴

It is interesting to note the statement that “there appears to be something mystic about the 5 plus percentage”. Later this idea was made famous in Raj Krishna’s “Hindu rate of growth”.

We, however, now have a group of young, competent, confident technocrats who have the intellectual insight and visual clarity to tell us that the emperor has no clothes; that the Hindu rate of growth is a pessimistic myth that we can break through. We now have the promise of an export-led middle-class-demand-fed growth rate of 7 per cent.⁵ We could call this the “NRI rate of growth” because the model builders for this rate are mostly ex-non-resident Indians. Their modern-day equivalent of sacrifice is the very act of returning to India. The achievement of this new rate of

growth requires that we give up some of our old shibboleths.

First among these is the concept of the “Commanding Heights” of the economy being occupied by the public sector. In their place we will now have heights of excellence, occupied by multinationals, NRIs and some of the more promising natives. These heights will be comparable, if not with the peaks in the developed world, then, at least, with their plains.

The second shibboleth to be given up is the concept of self-reliance. In an interrelated world, where multinationals are really internationals, the old inhibitions about foreign investments would have to be given up. The fear of such investments arose at a time when multinationals had a national focus and as such could have been looked upon as an extension of the national interests of any particular neo-imperialist country. But today the multinationals are no longer of this type. They are often located in tax havens and have no national identity. They may represent a class interest which has transcended the national interest. They may still be attacked on a class basis but not on the basis of national interests. We must, therefore, according to this view, learn to look at them in a different perspective. After all Gorbachev himself has conceded that “the changes occurring within the technological and organisational infrastructure of the capitalist economy also helped to allay contradictions and to balance different interests”. He also envisages that “For all their might, it is not the transnationals” (mark the phrase trans. — BPRV) “that will determine the Third World’s development; it is more likely that they will be forced to adjust to the independent choice that has been or will be made by the peoples”. Which means the possibility of bending them to our will exists. Why then be afraid of them or shun them? They can be the friendly genie like the genie of Aladdin’s lamp!

The third aspect is that, where there is a contradiction between policies that would contribute to increase in the rate of growth and those that might possibly be more conducive

to a better distribution of the incomes, the former should be selected, because the primary objective is the achievement of a 7 per cent rate of growth. The solution of the other problems in the economy, particularly that of poverty, is, according to this view, critically dependent upon this factor and as such this primary objective cannot be compromised.

Critics of this approach would fall broadly into two categories. Firstly, there are those who would question the technical basis of the assumption that, even given a certain set of policies, a growth rate of 7 per cent could be achieved within the in-built constraints of our economy. The controversy here is focused essentially on the ability to raise the growth rate in the agricultural sector. The second set of critics would argue that, even if the rate of growth is achieved, the consequence of it in terms of social inequalities, foreign indebtedness and abridgement of national autonomy, would be such that too high a price would have been paid for achieving this objective.

There are also two crucial problems that would arise as a consequence of this model even within its own assumptions. Firstly, the employment created by adopting this strategy would not be of a magnitude sufficient to create an impact on the problem of unemployment that confronts us. Secondly, this model of growth would increase the impact of urbanisation and it is here that the most dangerous social problems are likely to arise. As it is we are reaching a breaking point in regard to the problems of urbanisation in our country. These would reach critical proportions if this path were to be adopted. So long as unemployment remained predominantly in the rural sector and assumed the shape of concealed unemployment, or under-employment, the problems were manageable. In this model, however, unemployment will assume an urban aspect to a greater degree than at present. Given our inability to fundamentally change our educational system this would also reflect itself, more and more, in urban, educated unemployment, as our experience so far has already shown. It is here that the seeds

of social anarchy will be sown. This model, therefore, will have in our country the same consequences that similar models have already had, to a greater or lesser extent, in South American countries, namely, growing foreign indebtedness, on the one hand, and internal urban terrorism coupled with social breakdown, on the other.

The limits set for such a model by the availability of natural resources have also to be seriously considered. Even if we consider a market of only 100 million, and not 700 million, for this type of modern “consumer-durables” or “electronic-wage-goods” consumption pattern, will we have the physical resources that such a model would require? To quote Dr. Nyerere, for the Third World the main objective apparently is to “catch up with the North . . . defining development to mean catching up with the North means that development is impossible for the countries of the Third World. The US with about 6 per cent of the world’s population is now said to use 40 per cent of the world’s raw material and energy output.”

There will also be a financial constraint on public outlays in this model. Increasing privatisation not only of investments but also of services is therefore a necessary concomitant of this model. The most dangerous of the recent tendencies has been the growing privatisation of health services and education. When a few went abroad to receive the latest medical attention or the best education, it had no demonstration effect for a majority in the country who were not directly aware of this phenomenon. Today, under the new dispensation, when private medical facilities almost upto the Western standards are created within the country or when professional colleges with high rates of donation are set up, they are there within the society for others, who do not have access to them, to see. This increases their sense of deprivation and their dissatisfaction with the normal facilities that are available to them. A new discontent is, therefore, arising in our society based not on the old elementary needs like a square meal or cloth but deprivation

of these newer needs, of which they may not have been aware earlier but which are today conspicuously available to the few who can afford them. This is a trend which we can ignore at our own peril. In this phase the socialisation of social and welfare services is going to be a more crucial issue than the size of the public sector in industry, which has been the conventional touchstone of our commitment to socialism.

The socialisation of services will have to be considered not because of any ideological commitment but because of the size of our population. As levels of living rise, the demand for services will grow at such a pace that private provision of such services may become physically impossible. Physical constraints will set in. We can imagine what problems even a moderate growth in private ownership of vehicles on the Western pattern of consumerism will create for our urban sector, on the one hand, and for our demand for petrol, on the other. We have, therefore, to evolve new types of services — comfortable bus services against private cars; communal cold storage against individual refrigerators; fast food outlets against electric ovens and so on.

When we talk, therefore, of the 21st century it is necessary for us to work back from a perspective that starts with the availability of natural resources and the reality of the size of our population. If we did such an exercise we will realise that the Gandhian approach now has a new relevance: the Gandhian approach not in regard to the modes of production but in regard to the motives for consumption. We have to build a society whose consumer demand is based on the satisfaction of the basic requirements of a good life such as drinking water, electricity, clothing and public transport, and not on the satisfaction of needs which are artificially created and never satiated. Man's basic needs have physical limits, whereas his artificial needs have no limits except his own ingenuity in creating them. A new value system is therefore now not a philosophic necessity but an economic one. Economics no doubt creates values but values

also mould economic policies. At any given moment the initial instrument of intervention is very often a change in the value system as a condition precedent for a change in the economic system. There is confusion today in our country regarding our values and value systems. This confusion has to be resolved.

There can be no simple return to an earlier strategy. Words have lost their meaning during this interregnum. We had long ago created confusion regarding the concept of Socialism; today that confusion is worse confounded by Perestroika and China. The experiments there in regard to instrumentalities, on a base that had been transformed by a revolution, are thrown here at us both as confessions of past errors and prescriptions for future action. In a situation where the base has not only not been transformed but has, in fact, been consolidated such comparisons have no meaning. The old battles still need to be fought but they have to be fought with new instruments. In forging these new instruments we can no longer look for foreign idols as we did in the 1930s. Those idols are being demolished in their own temples. When a priest turns iconoclast he can deal a more grievous blow than when an unbeliever destroys our idols. There are no idols left; even if there are, they are now under threat of mortality. We have therefore to turn inwards; find our own solutions.

Fortunately, we have in Gandhi an idol that has not fallen; partly because his successor, Nehru, did not allow him to be idolised and partly because he lived a life so transparent that no exposure was possible. We bypassed him as being irrelevant and antediluvian. But he needs to be reconsidered. Professor Dantwala did it in 1944. A further reconsideration is necessary now, not so much from the point of view of choice of technologies or size of the unit of production, but from the point of view of our vision of man's needs and motivations — and their relationship to the definition of a desirable quality of life.

And from the point of view of the ownership of the means

of production. Given the constraints imposed by the size of our population, we thought earlier that Gandhi had a contribution to make only in regard to the methods of production. These ideas of Gandhi need to be reinterpreted in an Electronic Age. But we also need to redefine, on purely practical considerations, our ideas regarding the quality of life on the basis of his thoughts. As regards the ownership of the means of production, we have to reconsider our earlier positions in view of the fact that the possibilities of a revolutionary change are dimmer than earlier imagined. If this is so, we need to go back to Gandhi at least to make capitalism more humane than it is. In all this a reconsideration of Gandhi, albeit at a dialectically higher level, is needed. So when we make the "return" that Mohit Sen pleads for, a detour via Gandhi is called for. In such a revolutionary reconsideration Haksar with his unfettered and original intellect can provide us leadership once again.

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YOGINDER K. ALAGH

Views on Indian Development

P.N. Haksar is one of those charmed individuals who has become a legend during his lifetime. Through turbulent and fast changing times, he has been savant and guide to a generation or two of Indians. His sensitive face, jaunty walk and sometimes acidic tongue have become familiar to many of us. The effect is as Indian as the rain in the beginning of the *chaumasa* and if he is quiet one feels the drought. There is in the man an amazing directness of thought, a dislike for cant and triviality, and a concern for basics emerging from the surrounding reality. Also an ability to systematise and formalise an argument. These characteristics are attributed in his own words to “Unfortunately, I have been trained in mathematics” and again “I can’t forget my legal background”.

However, to Haksar, reason and completeness are not just exercises in formal logic but are used for burning social concerns. It is only if food goes down the gut, he says, that the body juices will flow upwards and the poor in India will become human beings. His conversations with youngsters, revolutionaries, idealists and visitors from developed countries, are soothing and caressing. Many a time I have

been told after the meeting, by the visitor, "Does he not take you to an altogether different plane?". But those who will use power to buttress their arguments, or to veil their banality, get only the contempt of the piercing eyes and the lash of the tongue.¹

Haksar's vision cuts across nations and yet at heart he is an Indian. He shared the dream that many saw in the first decade after independence and constantly keeps on refashioning it to suit the needs of the changing times. He knows that India did not have the wherewithal to contribute to the world stage in terms of raw power and so at some level he saw that the only thing that it could do was to project its Indianness. In these days of worship of the NRI, this may sound to many a little anachronistic. Yet, if India had an image to project, it was that of a poor saint in a loin cloth who had only truth and non-violence to offer and his romantic heir who tried to order a new world around the principles of reason, technology and co-existence. Haksar is a product of that age and also one of those who created it.

Frank Moraes in his biography of Jawaharlal Nehru ended up saying that it was difficult to evaluate the contribution of Nehru in the 1960s since his impact was on the minds of men, particularly on younger Indians who would make their own contribution in the decades to come. India has gone through many vicissitudes since then. But are there any underlying strengths? Is there at least a continuity in reasoning and thinking which can withstand the buffeting of ideas emerging from crass opportunism or interests of those who wield worldly power at home or abroad? Perhaps it is too early to decide and yet one can do no better than to reason out this idea in a tribute to Haksar. Haksar is unashamedly in the Nehruvian mould.

I propose in the rest of this article to try and put down some stray thoughts on India's development thinking since independence. There will be occasional references to technical aspects, but the concern is more on ideological underpinnings, social interfaces and development thinking

as a part of an ethos.

Let us begin with planning strategies. Three stages are of interest. The first is the planning methodologies articulated at the time of the Second Five Year Plan, sometimes called India's first real Five Year Plan. This plan was of interest both from the angle of planning methodologies (the famous Mahalanobis plan 2 frame), and emphasis on heavy industry.² For a period after this, the main technical developments related to the aspect of material balances for the Indian economy and the public sector investment programmes derived from these. The second major phase, however, could be thought of as the Fifth Five Year Plan where a more elaborate model was articulated for the formulation of the Five Year Plan and also explicit attention given, both to details of sectoral planning strategies, for example, for energy and agricultural sectors and to project appraisal techniques. In a final phase, which has continued through the present Plan, the emphasis on sectoral planning strategies has been greater and sub-models have been developed, in particular, laying emphasis on public investment strategies and policy choices. Now as the economy becomes more complex, an attempt is being made to graft the laws of the market, but still to a substantial section of concerned opinion the challenge is to maintain the strategic direction of a planned economy.

Early roots

At the beginning of the planning era, the economy inherited from the colonial period was highly fragmented and distorted. Two features bring out the dualism of the Indian economy in that period. First, the per capita availability of foodgrains declined from 200.2 kgs per annum as the quinquennial average for the period 1901-1906 to 152.2 kgs for the five years before independence and this decline was fairly systematic through almost every five year period. Second, at the time of independence, the level of

industrialisation was rudimentary and around 70 per cent of all industries were located around the port towns of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.³ These were the outcomes of colonial dependence. Thus, the major tasks of the planning era were to redirect capital resources and technical skills to vast areas where lay India's manpower and natural resources. Mahalanobis, being a physicist by training, visualised this problem almost as it were in a physical context as that of providing investment machines to the unemployed population in as short a time period as possible. For solving the wage fund problem he relied on the small scale and cottage industry sectors plus the assumption of a controllable fiscal policy. The famous Mahalanobis model is described at many places and it is not proposed to repeat it. The technical relations of the model between output, investment and labour in a four-sector economy were postulated in a causal chain coefficient matrix and as such both the problems of wage goods and consumption endogeneity as well as the possibilities of transformation of consumer goods to capital goods through international trade were ruled out, as it were by assumption.⁴ However, as S. Chakravarty has shown, economists could later "rationalise" the assumptions of the model through postulating disguised unemployment and shadow wage rates for labour, non-substitutability of capital between sectors, and questioning the validity of the small country assumption for international trade for an economy of India's size, particularly with its exportable basket in the mid-fifties.⁵

The proportion of investment allocated to the capital goods sector (the famous K) in the Mahalanobis model was set exogenously as 0.33. In fact, in a separate exercise the Indian biologist of British birth, J.B.S. Haldane, had shown through simulation exercises that over a 10-15 year period given certain reasonable (?) data assumptions, $K=1/3$ was in fact the appropriate choice in maximising intertemporal growth. The operational content for investment policies was a significant shift in allocation of investment to the

industrial and particularly the intermediate and heavy industry sectors (steel, power and machinery). Also, the language and approach of Indian planning changed. It was a remarkable achievement of the earlier Indian planners that an administrative and governmental fiscal system which was left behind by the colonial bureaucracy oriented mainly to law and order maintenance and land revenue collection very soon started discussing the language of planning, of consistencies and projections and material balances. The first material balances were produced in the early 1960s. In fact, early planning of the public sector in India was nothing more than the strategic directions of the Second Plan and the translation of the output requirements of critical sectors into projects, emerging out of certain rather rudimentary sectoral material balance calculations.⁶ In hindsight, it is quite clear that many of these numbers were highly exaggerated. For example, some of the earlier targets of electrical machinery of around 4,000 MW per annum or steel demand of around 10 million tonnes have yet to be achieved although investment proportions postulated then have been exceeded.

Very little attempt was made in the early phase on economic analysis of investment projects. In fact, a regular Project Appraisal division was set up in the Planning Commission in 1972. Mistakes were made, some of a very expensive variety, and yet this period set many of the basic parameters within which the strategy and allocation policies of public sector investment are made even today. Sectoral consistency, a strategic outline of the Plan in terms of the available assessment of constraints and possibilities, a conscious effort at self-reliance and the assumption of a controllable fiscal policy are still some of the guidelines of Indian planning, although in terms of methods and techniques and elaboration of models and data bases, the situation is vastly different now from what it was at the time of the Second and Third Five Year Plans. I have argued elsewhere that priority to the strategic elements of Indian planning has to continue in terms of reallocation of

resources for widespread agricultural growth, technological modernisation and self-reliance for priority sectors and policies for structural transformation for employment generation at an adequate standard of living.⁷ Within this framework some “laws of the market” can be grafted. I will not repeat the argument. Suffice it to say that there is an element of continuity in Indian development reasoning.

Recent ferment

There is considerable intellectual ferment in the country today. Being an economist interested in development and planning, I get plenty of opportunities to travel and have the good fortune of meeting a large number of our younger activists and thinkers—the “better elements” of our society. The critics of the big dam project, even the one that I planned, can be disagreed with for their incomplete understanding, but the raw passion they show can only be admired.⁸ At the frontier of India’s societal and development problems are these passionately young people. Take the problem of land, water and man. It is only these youngsters who have worked out that if the villagers are not involved, the problem is not even addressed. When the villager is involved, then governmental (or societal) assistance is required but it is marginal and is in many cases not made available because of stupidity or cussedness (shifting resources from one department to another). So we have large and expensive schemes in which no results are obtained (the people are not involved, so the foreign consultants on “review” show that results are not achieved), but others in which we show the way.⁹

The Prime Minister wants us to push ahead with agro-climatic regional planning. He sees the problems in land and he wants them resolved at a level of concrete reality. To operationalise this concept, and given my own training and experience, I share fully the objective. I travel all over the country on roads which are no longer existing after the

“worst floods”. But in each area, some people have “resolved” the problem. Young people, generally with a scientific background, voluntary workers, sometimes farmers, sometimes dedicated civil servants or bankers, have found the answers. My first job was in the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta. Vasant Gangavahene topped the batch of 1967/68 by a large margin. He could be the top man of a multinational company by now (all his peers inferior to him are). But he went back to his people in Ratnagiri and calls me there in 1988 and, at the village of Kuve, we see the soil which should not wash out into the sea. Later in the Ghats, driving back, I meet the almost naked peasants who live on *nachane*, the “small millet” of the hills and the degraded lands.

What is the language of the Gangavahenes, the Salunkyes (V. Salunkye of the *Pani Panchayat* in Maharashtra), the Achyut Dases in Orissa and of Bunker Roys in Tilonia? First, the idiom of the *international* and derived *national* discussion is wrong. This reality has to be understood on its own terms. At the macro level, it is my friend, V.N. Dandekar, who has constantly impressed me of this. Second, activate the creative forces at the local level and support them.

There is a similar story at the level of the large Indian industry and also the public sector. It is also our job to help activate the creative forces of the “better elements” there.

We have, however, to remember that in many areas we are working ourselves into a “box”. This is just not Punjab. In a large number of areas, we are just not performing and have created institutions which stalemate each other. We have to get out of these boxes, where we freeze the existing constraints and block out the solution paths to important problems.

The basic Indian problem is that of class. Groups which would have as of yore their share of the product without working for it are the problem. Those who have seen the way out of it are those who see the social space and the need to

organise and expand the surplus and the expansion of that space. That is the Indian problem, as soon as you get out of the clusters of artificial prosperity. The better elements are those who have seen that space and organised for it. They also cut through the cant and the selfish interest which stand in the way of organising that space.

P.N. Haksar saw that space many years ago. We will constantly recreate the vision. Between ourselves, there will always be discussion as also a certain recrimination. But there is no going back on the vision.

The important point is that the vision of the expanded space is Indian.

Where now?

It is better in an article of this kind not to get caught in a technocratic bind. The need to give direction to the development of India's political economy comes from its poverty. The two legs of India's development strategy come from the need to spread the fruit of technological progress, so that its masses are gainfully employed as quickly as possible, and to share the balance resources available so that the raw edge of poverty is blunted as much as it can be. The technological optimism of the 1950s, Mahalanobis, the Gandhian heritage, the agro-based river valley development of the early plans, the *panchayati raj*, the vision of the 21st century and its technology missions or the paradigms of agro-climatic regional planning, all arise from the overall compulsions of bringing about all-round development in a received fractured colonial economy and to develop a framework to contain the aspirations of its poor and proud people.

India never seriously considered a development path which was based on "dependency". There was, to begin with, the anti-colonial history of its freedom movement. Unlike South Korea, which passionately competes with Japan as a part of the catharsis of its own historical memories, the erstwhile

imperial power over India has neither the capacity nor, one suspects, the will to determine events in any significant manner. The arcane notion that some outside forces will help in resolving India's development problems surfaces in a mild or rabid form every now and then. Those who look to the sky for this angelic delivery are not to be faulted for their ideology, but for the ignorance they show of the arithmetic of India's development. In short, they are not pro-imperialist. They are just inefficient. India needs and must buy and get the best technology the world has to offer in order to resolve its priority problems. What is more important, it must endogenise this technology as a part of its own way of life. But it is just too big for the world to develop it.

There is another kind of arithmetic of efficiency which is of late abroad and which is equally mysterious. This logic first starts with setting the stage in terms of past behaviour. It then projects such budgets into the future and shows that all talk of radical change is misleading. As long as its production and technological potential remains unharnessed and its people remain hungry, change in India will always have to be larger at the margin than at the average. The conventional laws of the market will have to be always used, for all instruments must be used to further our goal but, in a fundamental sense, we will have to make such laws stand on their head to serve us.

To use reason and to create social and state power, so that the average Indian becomes the power of the future, is all that Haksar has been involved in.

Raw power, whether that of the colonial hangover of the police, the comprador, or those who would push us into a logic which is not of our own making, will not succeed in India. That is the logic Haksar has always stood for.

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8. Haksar, of course, wrongly agrees with them and in this case did not even call me to explain to him that the environmental and other aspects have been fully taken care of in the planning.
9. In an impressionistic review, ICAR shows a number of projects in which results were obtained in the last drought, with people's involvement in land shaping, local water harvesting, counter bunding, and the growth of the "appropriate" crop—a "tree crop"—a wheat, paddy, fodder cycle—a horticulture crop—but all combinations which the scientists say *strengthen* the land and its capability to generate fuller employment. Daman Singh and R. Bajaj of SPWD show that apart from the available subsidies, a sum of around Rs.2000/hectare would meet the requirement of this kind of development, if the available technology was employed in actual marginal farm situations.

A.K. DAMODARAN

Beyond the Welfare State

Young people today are bored and uninterested in the preoccupations of social welfare. Professionals, business executives and the new breed of instant communicators find planning, statistics, and the slow search for solutions unexciting. Younger politicians have a mixed response; some welfare schemes at the implementation end have a certain seasonable attractiveness to persuade the undecided voter. Populism leads to a certain romantic attachment to midday meals, free mobile clinics, potable water day after tomorrow, *et al.* About the philosophy of state planning, about the concerns which provoked this line of thinking in the early years of our century, most political activists today in the “centre left” national parties have no idea. They have many reasons for their scepticism and lack of interest. Rajaji’s nightmare of a “licence raj” flourishes while the organisation and the accountability which could ensure that state assistance reaches the neediest and the poorest have been absent for several years now. To many thoughtful people among the younger generation it is just another lost illusion.

There is a great deal of truth in all this but we in India, the classical imperialist target state yesterday and the classical developing state today, have to learn to be discriminating in our acceptance of the new fashionable theories in global economy arrangements and state fiscal policy. At the end of the 1980s, Reaganomics has had time to make its full impact not only on the domestic U.S. economy but also on the global situation and Mrs. Margaret Thatcher has given a new attractiveness to the concept of privatisation. What began as a primarily political rejection of state control in the capitalist democracies is sought to be projected as meeting the needs of the poorer countries also. It is not our purpose here to go into the absolute rights and wrongs of this debate but point out some of the limitations of this analysis when applied to a very large sprawling, noisy, multilingual, multiethnic state like India.

Advocates of a radical change from what can be most easily described as the Nehru vision of the good society in the Indian conditions are putting forward an alternative thesis of social organisation based upon the experience of the industrial, post-industrial and technologically sophisticated elite societies of the world whose affluence — and minority status primarily in demographic terms — is an essential precondition of their new and relative prosperity in a world population of which much the larger portion is still subdivided into passive, dependent and essentially other-directed political organisms. These economies range from the very primitive to the very advanced in the same country; their financial situations indicate morbid wealth and affluence in islands of security amidst large seas of utter deprivation. Even the success stories among these poor countries, developed according to textbook rules of the free market unplanned economy and depending on a frenetic transfer of resources from the rich to the poor for selective industrial development following a dubious system of priorities, are now suffering from debt burdens which have created an entirely new sense of insecurity in the global

metropolises, in the global suburbia and in the frontier marches. This complex situation makes the new remedies of privatisation and return to the laws of the market-place at best a complicated agenda for the very poor countries. It is necessary for all concerned people in these countries to examine methods which have worked in the imperial and post-imperial environment in advanced societies before they are applied to countries with more complex problems, heterogeneous populations and disparate degrees of development in education, cultural background and absorption capacity.

It is necessary to mention this because in the conditions in India at least the ideas of a mixed economy, careful state control, a powerful public sector and a thriving state-supported private industry appear to be as relevant today as it was 40 years ago when the Mahalanobis model was accepted. Fifteen years ago, when P.N. Haksar was Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, these ideas were further developed with a certain amount of self-confidence but increasing doubts in a changing global environment. At that time, in the early 1970s, the adventitious development of food sufficiency made the planners' task, temporarily at least, easier. This was also the period when the country as a whole became much more aware of the need for application of advanced technology in rural conditions and not merely to the urban situation and to mass manufacture. The Nehru vision, which had its real origin in the negative experiences of all the countries of the world, both the rich and the poor, after the Great Depression, seems to some of us today to be not only not irrelevant, but increasingly useful, as a model to refer back to, even when new technology and new methods of management have made major changes necessary in detail.

It is necessary to be a little more specific about this Nehru model. The distinctive experience of the 30s of our century is inevitably associated in our minds with the ideas of John Maynard Keynes, applied Marxism in the semi-real, semi-fictitious Soviet state of the early Five-Year Plans as

described by the Webbs, and the remarkable recovery in the USA effected by Franklin D. Roosevelt through his New Deal legislation.

Jawaharlal Nehru chronologically belongs to the generation of Roosevelt and Keynes — a little younger than they — and also Stalin. In spite of the fact that he was not in power at that time and that he was not a trained economist or a political scientist, his concern for the deprived people in his own country made him a creative interpreter of many of these foreign ideas to the younger people in our country at a time when they appeared to be absurdly utopian, with an authoritarian foreign government controlling all economic activity. In theoretical terms, the Keynesian alternative to laissez-faire by state intervention in public works, welfare activity and employment creation, continues to be the point of reference or departure. Nehru grew up in the first ten years of the century; in one sense he was a disciple of the earlier positivist and permanent optimists who believed in the perfectibility of human society. It was, to strike an irreverent note, a most fortunate case of retarded or delayed development in personal terms. For the good of India, an indifferent natural scientist was transformed into a thoughtful social scientist. Nehru's return to India from Cambridge and the world war destroyed all these illusions and, in a remarkable effort at self-education, he developed in the third and fourth decades of his life a wholly new approach to political and social organisation.

In a rather convoluted manner, therefore, Jawaharlal in India represented "advanced thought" during the 1930s. That was when so many young men from India, who had gone to the London School of Economics or to Oxford and Cambridge, were bitten by the socialist, Fabian, even Marxist bug, so to speak. There were Rhineland, Czechoslovakia and Munich in the background and the new excitements of the poetry of concern and commitment. "Now is the struggle". Haksar belongs to this group. A large majority of the senior members of the communist parties of

India also belongs to this group. They were the ones who absorbed in Europe during that sad end-of-an-era atmosphere, with the fascist jackboot trampling over the little flowers of democracy which President Wilson had planted in Europe after the Treaty of Versailles, a total conviction of the interrelated nature of capitalism in the home countries of the imperial continuum and the colonies which sustained this capitalism. It is something which they learnt from Lenin and Hobson, from Palme Dutt and John Strachey, and the great popularisers of history, politics and science during that fateful decade, men like H.G. Wells, C.E.M. Joad, G.D.H. Cole and, of course, Bernard Shaw. On an entirely different creative level, but enormously effective in his own country as a re-articulator of other people's ideas and belonging to the same generation of educators and ardent evangelists, was Jawaharlal Nehru. To the younger people in India, like myself (almost a decade younger than Haksar), who were still in their teens when the first war came, he represented a reasonably satisfactory introduction to the world outside. In a very limited sense, without forcing analogies with the giants of the generation like Freud and Yeats, he was, for us "a climate of opinion".

This generational experience is important because the people who were influenced by all this were opinion-moulders and, to some extent, policy-makers during the first 30 years of India's independence. Many achievements were recorded by them and some inevitable mistakes made, inevitable in the transplanting of ideas from other continents, and other social situations. During this past decade, however, we have seen a certain theoretical indifference to the Nehru values in political culture as well as in economic priorities even though carefully modulated references are made in the proper tone and in the right accent on all ritualistic occasions. This is what has happened in India in practice. In theory, there is a fairly loud outburst of derision against the welfare state, against state interventionism, against subsidies and against all activities

intended to protect the very poor. This reaction is based on, as was mentioned above, the successful application of supply-side economics in the developed capitalist societies of the West and Japan, and in the newly industrialised countries of East Asia, and also the stagnation in the planned economies of the socialist world which led to very loud and uninhibited rethinking of their own economic premises in the Soviet Union and in China. These have provided the justification for a total rejection of the Nehru model which concerned 'bureaucrats' like Haksar spent their whole careers in applying in uncontrolled non-laboratory conditions in the 1960s and the 1970s. Such a rejection is firmly based on the picture of a large layer of prosperous, even affluent middle-class citizens in India which will, it is confidently expected, replicate in the next generation the successes of the Western democracies. The big flaw in the Nehru model, the continuing deprivation of a large section of the people below the poverty line can, it is assumed, be allowed to persist because of their political ineffectiveness. Also, it is calculated that petit bourgeois values and a wave of rising expectations about consumer articles would keep the poor reasonably busy in climbing up the social ladder while the very poor can be ignored.

This seems to some of us to be not only unacceptable morally but absurd in practical terms. The real parallels to India for development purposes should be Indonesia, Brazil, China and the Soviet Union. Their mixed experience should make us very cautious of adopting any free enterprise model. At no point did Nehru or his colleagues accept state planning in its entirety. We are going to witness in the next two decades an experiment in the major socialist countries in which private economic activity is permitted to a large extent under an overarching state control. There is no evidence that any of the socialist countries is planning to do away with political authority by the ruling communist party. These experiments within the socialist system would be useful to us and be as relevant to our next stage of development as the

attempts made during the decade of Roosevelt and Keynes to make capitalism flexible enough for ensuring social justice and a more rational distribution.

In our country the disparities are so large as to rule out the transplantation of any single model. The splendour of the Nehru vision was in its capacity to be receptive and at the same time selective. There is really no alternative to this; if we jettison these basic premises, we would be subjecting our long-suffering, immensely attractive, decent, simple people to totally unnecessary suffering, both on a permanent debilitating basis and, in addition, in sharp, short, agonising crises. Our whole national attention would, in effect, be devoted to crisis management rather than crisis prevention in a realistic manner.

Names do not matter so much as the central essence of the welfare state, the Fabian vision, the inevitability of gradual improvement in an increasingly better world for the largest number of people. In all his writings and speeches during the last 20 years, Haksar has made it an almost religious commitment to emphasise certain values which are in danger of being forgotten or at least eclipsed. The most important of these, it seems to me, concerns social organisation in the modern state. These values, these prescriptions — even more important, this political culture — derive inevitably from Jawaharlal Nehru whose writings and policies provide essential ingredients of any democratic society in the Indian situation. This has meant, in Haksar's perception, a scientific attitude towards the relations between persons, between groups, and between the state and the people and the groups. More urgently, it has meant an angry rejection of superstition and the easy way out of difficult situations. In this, as all of us know, our generation has failed. Superstition triumphs, revivalism is on the upswing and anti-scientific attitudes are being rationalised in respectable, pseudo-scientific vocabulary and with post-scientific metaphysics. There has to be a much greater emphasis on the scientific temper. At the same time, we

should never forget something which Haksar himself has never forgotten in his writings. The scientific attitude carried beyond a certain limit can itself become a superstition. Along with the scientific temper and the social justice state, our society continues to demand much more urgently than 40 years ago the assertion, the reiteration and much more effective implementation of the secular ethos. This again is something which Haksar learnt from Nehru and which our country can ill afford to forget.

In a brief reassessment of the relevance of an earlier generation to the impatient, justifiably angry young men and women of today, it is not necessary to go into detail about the great principles of foreign policy which Nehru went on exploring throughout his life, both in the years before power and the period of Prime Ministership. Here it is necessary to remind ourselves that it is not enough to make a simple statement that Jawaharlal's non-alignment continues to be relevant. The conditions have changed. The second cold war is also over. The second period of detente is dawning; the socialist countries are anxious to co-operate with the multilateral system. There is hope in the air; at the same time, there is also uncertainty in the very weak nations whose solidarity was crystallised in the idea and institutions of non-alignment. Today Nehru's non-alignment must be seen again in its essential, basic, embryonic, *positive* aspect. It is the achievement of total autonomy by the weaker societies, by the smaller states, by the poorer nations in a world system which should not be permitted to intervene, more than absolutely necessary, in the right of the various peoples of the world to develop according to their own freely expressed will.

This is the beginning, of course, of the problems of the modern world. Have we reached a stage where a benignant enough world body can be visualised which could intervene to prevent abuse by the state against the minorities, the malcontents and the dissenting individual just as the fully developed modern state has succeeded in intervening to

prevent injustice and exploitation between groups and individuals within the state? This was the ultimate vision of men like Jawaharlal whose early childhood was inspired by the parliament of mankind, the federation of the world concept, but who grew up to realise the bitter truth that angry, belligerent nationalism was a necessary earlier stage before that particular dream could be realised. In the world of today, after Gorbachev and Reagan, when the great nations of the world are co-operating on a limited basis but seem to be increasingly reconciled to indefinite continuation of the difficulties and conflicts in the outer areas of the world, countries like India will have to reassert in a firm but polite manner their own specific priorities dictated by the needs of the poorest in our societies.

In an almost inevitable manner we will have to go back through Jawaharlal Nehru to his master, Gandhi, whose picture of a future India he had found flawed in many respects. He could empathise with Gandhi's angry, rejectionist vision in *Hind Swaraj*, even though he could never bring himself to accept it as immediately relevant to independent India. There was never, for example, not for a single moment, any doubt in Jawaharlal's mind about the absolute, exclusive importance of the *Antyodaya* concept in Gandhiji's picture. The creative development of Gandhiji's *Hind Swaraj* and Jawaharlal's non-alignment in the world today would mean a much more urgent sensitivity to the poorest individuals, groups, tribes and states. It would be a terrible irony if, in our brilliant adaptation of modern technology to our conditions, as our people are quite capable of doing, and as we have demonstrated since Nehru's days, we forget the equally important need to ensure that this adaptation is done with proper respect for nature, tradition and our physical environment.

All these have been the obsessions, the excitements of P.N. Haksar. These are what has made him an inevitable continuer and developer of the Nehru outlook during a very difficult period of doubt and transition. What is most

charming about his attitude is something which he shares with Nehru, his acceptance of dilemmas and sophisticated options. We have to be wary of the quick fix, the easy answer. Men like Nehru and Haksar were brought upon the patient wisdom of an earlier generation:

*Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul,
When hot for certainties in this our life!*

Such a comfortable statement about uncertainties is, perhaps, unfair to genuine men of action like Nehru and professional decision-makers like Haksar. In the nature of things they cannot afford to be indecisive too long. Apart from a common interest in the post-Marxist understanding of human society and a carefully thought out, considerate, sympathetic approach to problem-solving in a developing society, Haksar shared with Jawaharlal a deep sense of history and the place of the individual in history. In all his writings there is a pervasive sense of the continuous interaction between the living tradition and the creative individual; it is not merely a transplantation into contemporary Indian thought of a brilliant idea of a great English poet. Eliot's famous essay was innovative and influenced many of us in its time but Haksar has gone back to the wellsprings of Indian thought, of Sanskrit literature, of Urdu poetry to seek new impulses for the contemporary Indian citizen. This is what he means when he refers to *Parampara* (Tradition) and *Parivartan* (Change) in his writings. These great ideas are common to the East and the West, not only in geographical terms but also in ideology and religion. It was a great Western philosopher, Pascal, who thought of man as a reed but a thinking reed. Haksar's favourite Indian poet, Kalidasa, expressed the same thing when in the prefatory, almost excessively modest, verses of the *Raghuvamsa* he sees himself as a mere thread winding its way through a "word aperture" made by the hard diamond-like intellect of his predecessors piercing through the pearl

of language:

*Athava krithavagdware
Vamsesmin poorva sooribhihi
Manow vajra samoolkirne
Soothrasyeva me gati*

When Haksar speaks about the 20th century, in terms of the distant paleontological eras as well as the still more distant eons of the early universe, and brings all this awareness to bear upon the fantastic technological progress man has achieved on this planet in two or three centuries, he is rising above the level of a mere planner or a scientific thinker to a philosopher who seeks, explores and accepts what he does not understand. It is this quality which has made us treasure every brief minute we have spent with him. He never forgets the individual in history, in society, and in time and space.

I remember when Mr. and Mrs. Haksar visited Moscow in 1971. The Bangladesh crisis was slowly rising to a crescendo and he had his hands full in discussing it with the Soviet foreign office. In between these discussions, however, he found time to talk to us about a new book of Academician Sakharov which had just been published outside the Soviet Union where the great Soviet nuclear scientist expressed his concerns about human rights in all societies. Today, Academician Sakharov is again an honoured citizen in his own country and the leader of the Soviet state, Mikhail Gorbachev, speaks without any inhibition about “man being the measure of all things”. This is good news indeed for Haksar. Even as he acknowledged the material achievements of the most ambitious welfare state of all, the Soviet Union, he shared Sakharov’s concerns about human rights in that country. In his desire to have the welfare state he has never forgotten the basic fact that the State, even in its kindest and most generous form, is but an instrument for the fulfilment of the human personality.

SATISH CHANDRA

Tinkering with Transformation of Educational System

Ever since Independence, there has been much controversy in the country regarding our educational system and the desired educational ideals and objectives. There was no gainsaying that the system had been created by the British to suit their interests, and needed to be changed to suit the national requirements. But there was no agreement what these requirements were. To some the primary objective of education was cultivation of the spirit, and the building up of character. This was really a euphemism for the demand that education should be used for the fostering and dissemination of traditional, i.e., religious values. It was also a continuation of the notion developed during colonial rule that the essence of our civilisation was spiritualism, whereas the Western civilisation was based on materialism. It, therefore, disdained modern science and its values. A second set of people tended to be impatient with old, traditional values and believed that a system of education based on secularism, modern science and the growth of a scientific

temper would not only help to overcome differences based on religion, but would speed up the process of national development.

Thus, differences regarding educational ideas, objectives and priorities were rooted in different perceptions regarding the future social and political structure of the country. In a manner of speaking, this controversy reached its head under the Janata rule between 1977 and 1979. This was preceded by the demand for “Total Revolution”, spearheaded by Jayaprakash Narayan. The “J.P. Movement”, and the earlier “Nav Nirmana Agitation” in Gujarat, may be likened to the Jacqueries revolt in France during the 14th century. They were a kind of an elemental upsurge based on pent-up frustrations and sense of deprivation. Unlike in France, however, these movements did not really involve the peasants — in fact, J.P.’s Movement failed as soon as an attempt was made to take it to the villages. Also, unlike in France, both were entirely non-violent which, perhaps, was another factor in their middle class appeal.

Nevertheless, the J.P. phenomenon was based on another facet of the national movement: its strong egalitarian and democratic approach. In the field of education, it wanted to break the British bond of elitism. This implied a system of mass education which had to be inexpensive, emphasised dignity of labour, and minimised social disparities. Under the influence of Nehru, the concept of developing science and technology in order to build a modern industrialised nation had been added. These two aspects, primary education which would be available to all and constitute the basis of social justice and democracy, and higher education which would provide quality and nurture modern science and technology, continued to be viewed separately till the appointment of the Education Commission in 1964. Until then it was basically a period of drift in the field of education, in primary, secondary and higher spheres, despite the appointment of a University Grants Commission (UGC) in 1953 for “the determination and co-ordination of

standards”.

The net result was proliferation of low-level secondary schools, with the private and convent-run English medium schools catering to the more affluent sections. At the same time, there was growth of a widely dispersed system of undergraduate colleges which had little academic freedom and means of innovation. The universities formed the apex. Although there was provision of reservation for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and a limited number of merit-cum-means scholarships, this approach did not imply any drastic change in the educational structure. Nor did it do anything to change the social composition of the educated sections except that the emerging middle classes eclipsed the old landed classes. Inevitably, the colonial attitudes persisted.

These two dilemmas — the question of tradition versus modernity, and of quality versus equality — are still with us despite various efforts to resolve them. During the tenure of Mrs. Gandhi, P.N. Haksar, as is well known, played a quiet but significant role from behind the scenes in almost every field. In the field of education, although a “modernist”, Haksar never minimised the value of tradition, though he refused to view tradition or values in an essentially religious framework. Haksar was also emphatic on two points: first, education was above all a means of increasing human resources for purposes of personal growth as well as social development; second, education was a subset of the social system. “You cannot have *moksha* in the field of education without *moksha* in the social field”, he once told me in his characteristic way when I had approached him for more funds to the UGC in the case of higher education.

The fourth and the fifth Five Year Plans (1969-79) were a significant period in the field of education, not only because the educational budget was substantially increased during the Fifth Plan, but on account of the clarity of purpose provided by the Education ministry which was headed by Professor Nurul Hasan during most of the period, with J.P.

Naik as the senior advisor. As a result, other educational agencies, such as the UGC and the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), were also able to pull a greater weight.

Critics are not wanting who find fault with government, the UGC, the NCERT, etc., for not making greater effort during the decade to implement the report of the Education Commission. As I saw it, despite a large number of recommendations covering every field of education, the main thrust of the Education Commission consisted of:

- (i) Raising the quality of higher education through the setting up of major universities;
- (ii) Raising the standard of school education and regulating access to higher education through a 12-year schooling and two public examinations followed by a 3-year bachelor's degree (10 + 2 + 3);
- (iii) Making education more relevant through diversification of courses, vocationalisation of education at the secondary level and raising standards of 10 per cent of the schools to provide quality; and
- (iv) Introduction of the neighbourhood school system in order to emphasise elements of egalitarianism and democracy.

Not all these objectives were realisable in the situation prevailing. In fact, one of the acute observers of the educational scene, J.P. Naik, who was also Secretary of the Education Commission, later observed:

While the Commission did prepare a fairly good blueprint of the national system of education, its report did not highlight the close links between education and society. Nor did it elucidate how the dialectical process of education leads, on the one hand, to a strengthening and perpetuation of the status quo and, on the other, to social change and development... a radical reconstruction of

education and a socio-economic transformation have to go together. It is very often found that people believe that major educational changes can be brought about without attempting corresponding changes in society itself. Such illusions do a considerable harm and have to be dispelled.

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As it was, the parliamentary committee appointed by government rejected the idea of "neighbourhood schools". This was unfortunate since the adoption of neighbourhood schools, even on a limited scale, would have provided a big boost to the standard of education at the primary and middle levels, long considered the weakest links in the educational chain. Moreover, the parliamentary committee, consisting of all parties, rejected the idea of raising the standards of ten per cent of the schools, dubbing the idea elitist. This left the field free for private and missions-run English medium schools. In other words, populism led to a furtherance of disparities.

The Education Commission itself gave up the idea of major new universities in the light of severe criticism by the existing universities. The objective of raising quality in the universities had, therefore, to be fulfilled by other means. The UGC, then headed by Dr. D.S. Kothari, launched a programme of setting up Centres of Advanced Study in chosen fields in selected universities and updating their syllabi through a programme of summer institutes, refresher courses, etc. These programmes were reviewed and further strengthened by the UGC during the fourth and fifth Five Year Plans. At the time, considerable emphasis was laid on updating the syllabi and strengthening research in the universities which was cost-effective by identifying priority areas with the help of expert panels. This aspect of the Education Commission's report was taken little notice of by Parliament and the press when the question of its implementation was being discussed, and is still neglected

by the public. But this part of the UGC's work should be recorded as a success story. These programmes have raised the standard of research in the university system, and helped in the updating of syllabi. They are being continued and further strengthened during the seventh plan, and form an important part of the National Policy for Education set out in 1986.

A major effort was made during this phase to implement the 10 + 2 + 3 system, and to make a beginning with the vocationalisation of secondary education. To persuade the various state governments to accept the 10 + 2 + 3 system, and thus, for the first time, have a uniform system of education in the country, was a harder nut to crack than might have been expected. The difficulties — financial, structural and otherwise — are well known and need hardly be recounted here. By the time the Congress party fell from power in 1977, most of the states had accepted the system. After some initial hesitations, the Janata government also accepted it, though Morarji Desai did not: he termed it a “disaster”. The net result was that the school term was lengthened to 12 in those states where it was 11, but little effort was made to upgrade the syllabi. The same was more or less the tale where a year was added to the bachelor's degree course. In consequence, the master's degree remained a general degree instead of being a degree of research, a highly selective situation which prevails in most universities of the developed world.

This shows that well-intentioned reforms can often be defeated by the inertia of the system which, itself, is a gigantic one. It is difficult enough to move, and even more difficult to provide a coherence and direction. Thus, the scheme of vocationalisation hardly moved — except, to some extent, in Tamil Nadu. This was so largely because the work culture of an industrialised society is still missing in India. In consequence, working with one's hands is considered demeaning by the upper classes and castes, and those who try to ape their ways. This is a problem which any scheme of vocationalisation in the country would have to

face and overcome.

I am not, of course, implying that due to these in-built difficulties there was little or precious little development in the field of education during the period. A national system of education had, at last, been evolved. Emphasis was laid on vocational education, and a beginning made with non-formal education in order to tackle the major problem of dropouts from the primary schools which affected most the poor, the backward and the women.

As far as higher education was concerned we can say that, despite constraints and difficulties, there was considerable growth in the quantum and quality of research in the universities and, even more, in the self-confidence of researchers. Indian researchers no longer had to look outside the country even for meagre research grants. However, the effort to identify priority areas of research, and to link research grants more closely to those without closing the door for open-ended research, proved controversial. Not all the foreign foundations and countries were happy at the new approach since they could no longer recruit cheap Indian labour for projects useful to them rather than to India. However, even these agencies modified their attitude to some extent after some time. One representative of U.S. universities in India told me in 1979 that he had come to India after a gap of ten years and found that all top relevant work on India was now being done in India itself! I did not quite agree with this assessment because I was aware of the weaknesses. But it was pleasant to hear that all our efforts to improve the standard of university teaching and research had not gone in vain. In this context I am constrained to say that we must avoid the national pastime of being chary of admitting past successes but harping on failures.

A major problem in maintaining standards in higher education was unplanned proliferation. Aware that enrolment in higher education in the country was less than 4 per cent, far lower than in any developed country and lower even than in Panama, and aware that there was more to access

to higher education than finding jobs, and that large sections of the population which had not been able to avail themselves of higher education must not be shut out in the name of selectivity, the UGC laid emphasis on careful planning of new universities, and regulating *not* admission to higher education but those weak, sickly colleges which were being born at the rate of four per week! Exhortations to the state governments and denial of central grant to such colleges had, however, only a limited effect. The birth rate of such colleges has gone up again, despite the fact that the growth of enrolment has come down from 12 to 14 per cent, in the 1960s and early 1970s, to about 4 per cent in the decade 1974-75 to 1984-85.

Also, a number of apex universities have been started, and facilities for correspondence courses are offered by some two dozen universities. Neither autonomous colleges, nor the setting up of an accreditation council, as proposed in the National Policy for Education document, are likely to solve this problem. In consequence, disparities within the system will grow. The only solution appears to be giving a new orientation to rural colleges and providing more teeth to the proposed State Councils of Higher Education. Meanwhile, we have newspaper reports of colleges which work in garages, which have no library and where teachers are paid a pittance. To open such colleges where only the poor or village folk go is a type of corruption to which no political parties pay any attention.

The only significant initiative taken by the Janata government in the field of education was to give a very high priority to the programme of Adult Literacy. The objective was laudable since the country could hardly progress in the field of social justice and faster economic growth without overcoming this disadvantage. However, the target of making literate 100 million people in the age group 15-35 in a period of five years was totally unrealistic from any point of view. It has now been lengthened to ten years which was the original target proposed. However, one may doubt if even

this target is attainable without a sharp change either in the political scene, or massive outlays which are not forthcoming.

The sixth Five Year Plan was really a phase of marking time in the field of education. The fifth Five Year Plan had started, however, on a note of high hope. Allocation for higher education had been doubled from the Fourth Plan. There was an upward revision of teachers' salaries, bringing the salaries of university and college teachers on par with the salaries of Grade I officers in the Government of India. The new pay scales were sought to be linked with quality, including greater emphasis on research, innovation in syllabi, etc. Despite political uncertainty, the imposition of the Emergency, the triumph of the Janata, and its subsequent downfall, the in-built safeguards within the system provided a cushion against sharp changes. The Janata party was committed to a drastic reform of the educational system, but it was a house divided, and unable to indicate any clear lines of development. It did hammer out a statement on National Policy which was released in 1979. But by that time the Janata was on its way out, and the document remained a dead letter.

In the field of higher education, Morarji Desai as Prime Minister took a keen personal interest and spent a lot of time trying to put forward his educational ideas before members of the UGC. Characteristically, in one of the meetings, he remarked that the educational system had been spoilt because of paying such high salaries to the teachers. He also recounted the early hardships he had to face, and how poverty had helped to steel his character. The commission tactfully pointed out that this might not be the most effective way of building character in the present times, nor would all react to poverty the way he had done. Morarji did not press the point and left to the UGC to effect such reforms in the field of higher education as it thought fit. Members of the UGC were, therefore, mystified when they read in the papers soon afterwards Morarji's statement that he would change

the entire educational system in six months' time. I sought an interview with the Prime Minister to seek clarification. In the course of an interview at Gujarat Vidyapeeth in Ahmedabad, Morarji dispelled all doubts by saying, "I have made the announcement. It is now for you (the UGC) to decide what to do."

To this day I am not sure whether Morarji was giving full freedom to the UGC and various agencies to carry out educational reforms as they thought fit, or whether he had set a time of six months for educational reforms to allay criticism within the Janata party. It was well known that some of the constituents of the Janata party were not happy with the concepts of "secularism", "scientific temper", etc. In this way, they wanted to revise the educational policy document of 1968 and denounced some of the history textbooks for schools prepared under the aegis of the NCERT to promote national integration on the basis of secularism. I had taken the trouble to write one of the textbooks. This, perhaps, was the background to the message I received at this time through an emissary from the Education minister, Dr. Pratap Chunder Chunder, asking me to resign from the post of Chairman, University Grants Commission. I was a bit surprised, because no such hint had been given to me either by Morarji, or his close associate, Ramlal Parikh, Vice-Chancellor, Gujarat Vidyapeeth, whom I had known during the days of the Emergency when I had visited his institution. As usual I turned to P.N. Haksar for advice and guidance. Haksar was of the opinion that it would be wrong for posts such as the Chairmanship of the UGC to be treated as political appointments and that to do so would be a violation of the Constitution. Nevertheless, he advised me to send in my resignation while pointing out the constitutional position. Ultimately, the matter was sorted out when the minister stoutly denied that he had ever sent any message asking for my resignation.

I have mentioned these events only to highlight the fact that the atmosphere during the Janata rule was not

conducive to team work or new initiatives. In fact, the government and the UGC often appeared to be working at cross purposes instead of being in unison. This was the background which led the minister to issue a “directive” to the UGC — the first one in its history — to review its programmes. Since the government had at no stage objected to, or criticised, any of the programmes of the UGC, and a ten-year review of the working of the UGC prepared under the chairmanship of V.S. Jha was pending with the government, such a “directive” appeared to be strange indeed. In the end, a series of committees were appointed to carry out the review. It did help the UGC to pinpoint some weaknesses, and propose new initiatives. But the report never saw the light of day.

The New Policy on Education (1985), which has come 20 years after the Education Commission report has, therefore, come not a day too late. That it was possible to compile such a report, covering almost every aspect of education in such a brief time, shows the maturity on the basis of experience the country has attained during the two decades. Although some of the documents are bureaucratic in origin and betray the virtues and shortcomings of their origin, they are brief and up to the point but somewhat lacking in imagination. Together they give a fairly balanced picture of our achievements and failings in the field of education during the period since the Education Commission report and the possible lines of action. While it is always possible to disagree with some of the recommendations, or propose alternate modes of achieving an objective, the basic question remains. Can the best documents elicit the type of political support and mass participation which is necessary for transforming our present educational system? This is the knot which no report or commission can resolve by itself. A meaningful transformation of our educational system can, therefore, come about only by one of the two ways — a slow, painful but steady process of reforms, possibly spread over several decades, ensuring that the existing disparities are

mitigated and quality maintained, or a transformation of the political scene whereby the necessary political will and people's participation are generated. The tragedy is that we are not prepared to work for a social overhaul of our system. We are unwilling or impatient of a long haul and are, therefore, drawn towards short, quick, and painless success.

VINAY BHARAT RAM

Human Dimension of Indian Management

The present-day industrial relations scene in India is not very encouraging. The multiplicity of unions, their politicisation, unsound labour legislation, and ineffectiveness of the government, the third partner in the tripartite system of industrial relations in dealing with the problems, have largely contributed to this state of affairs. All this cannot be remedied by a magic wand but through better legislation and a set of policies which may lead to participation of workers willingly, improving employee-employer relations by developing a feeling of trust, acceptance of unions as confederates and not adversaries, and treating the workers as human beings.

The Indian manager, needless to say, will have to play a crucial role in bringing about the desired changes. He can learn from his intellectual grooming achieved through the educational streams of the management institutes and business schools and/or draw upon the rich cultural and intellectual heritage of India so as to keep his moorings to face the challenges.

Indian heritage

The Indian heritage is based on the philosophies propounded, among others, by Valmiki, Ved Vyas and Swami Vivekananda. The epic battle of *Mahabharat* and the principles enunciated in *Ramayan* as well as in the *Bhagavad Gita* highlight a number of situational management sequences, the process of strategy formulation and the concept of management by objectives. Rama can also be portrayed as a warrior par excellence when he uses his monkey battalions to overcome the armies of Ravana. It seemed to be an ideal case of making the optimal use of limited resources in a given situation.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna helps in imparting goal as well as role clarity to Arjuna when he is confused in the thick of the battle. The *Gita* stresses the right to action without any expectation of a reward. It also specifies three *gunas* (qualities) — *satta* (pleasant, happy); *rajas* (painful, unhappy); and *tamas* (delusive, deluded) — which constitute human systems: individuals, groups and organisations.

Historically, *Guna Mandals* (quality circles) have been used in different social, religious and political settings since the dawn of Indian civilisation to enhance *sattvic* qualities (i.e., urge for excellence and knowledge, concern for others' interests, trust and confidence, self-actualisation, etc); minimise *rajasic* (urge for economic resources, authority and power, concern for personal interests, restlessness and tension, craze for ego-inflation, etc.); and *tamasic* qualities (i.e., proneness to error, indolence and wickedness, urge to exploit and damage others, distrust, loss of self-identity, etc.).

The philosophy of contentment is the basic principle of work ethic of today's management. Furthermore, the concepts of *sam*, *dam*, *dhand* and *bhed* are equally relevant to the present-day managerial needs. The literature of the rich cultural heritage of India is endless, stretching beyond the tenets of Manu and the message of Gandhi. This cultural heritage is an important stream of thought for the Indian

manager today.

Management education

The Indian manager's professional grooming and intellectual ancestry, not counting the trading families of course, goes back to the British services or the British managing agencies of the pre-independence era. After independence, and particularly in the 1960s, the focus shifted to the United States. An MBA degree from a prestigious U.S. business school became the hallmark of managerial thoroughbreds. During this time, management institutes were set up in India on the pattern of the U.S. business schools which became breeding grounds for the intellectual thoughts of the younger generation of managers.

In a country where the process of industrialisation started much later than in the West, this is, however, to be expected. The basic tenets of management education, therefore, go back to the early years of the century when industry in the West had already experienced the benefits of mass production. Henry Ford's model-T had become a legend epitomising the spread of benefits of standardisation and assembly line to the common man. In the meantime, Frederick W. Taylor had set the stage for industrial engineering and time-and-motion study. He observed workers at the bench and succeeded in separating a job into its component elements. This enabled him to select the best method of doing a particular task faster but with no more effort.

As time passed, the study of managerial problems in the West became behaviour oriented. Behavioural scientists delved deep into the organisational problems relating to structure, effectiveness, motivation and sensitivity. Simultaneously, new quantitative techniques came to be applied extensively. The two concurrent trends led to the development of a new body of knowledge which came to be taught in the business schools of the USA. From there, it came to India via the institutes of management, business schools, executive development programmes, etc.

The late 1970s have witnessed the beginning of yet another cycle. The reference point of the Indian manager is seen to be shifting eastward to Japan, which has achieved spectacular advances in the field of industry.

The Western component of the Indian manager's intellectual heritage is readily visible. His educational groomings have ironically steeped him in the influences of the West. However, it is doubtful if he has even a nodding acquaintance with the traditions and the rich heritage of his own country. Take, for example, the subject of conflict resolution, something which is widely discussed in business schools abroad as well as here. Although the Indian manager may be aware of what has been said on the matter in the West, he does not seem to be drawing any lesson from the stories of *Mahabharat* or *Ramayan*.

Paradoxically, it is the Indian worker who is much better acquainted with his country's traditions. Symbols which appear lifeless to the manager provide the worker with the entire meaning of existence. No wonder that the worker has been much better at resisting alien influences. Whether it is the dialectic of materialism or the alleged attitude of fatalism, the worker seems to take them in his stride. The Indian manager, on the other hand, is always wondering what makes the British tick or what makes the Americans tick or what makes the Japanese tick. All this while the most important question of what makes the Indians tick remains unanswered.

Then, there are the additional set of problems centering around the question of language. It is well known that our managers are taught in the English language and are generally handicapped in communicating in Hindi or other Indian languages. They can rarely, if at all, match the union leader when it comes to communicating with the worker. Communication, needless to emphasise, plays a vital role and is one of the most essential prerequisites of healthy human relations and, even, technical advancement. Technical breakthroughs, for example, are achieved by means of ideas

that in their seminal form emerge from the shop floor. In other industrialised countries, many new processes and products come from the suggestions of workers, who are considered a reservoir of common sense and experience from which the management can draw. However, a commonly understood language of communication is needed to draw on that reservoir. Not so in this country where virtually every idea exchanged between the worker and the manager has to be translated into or from English.

Use of a certain language in India dubs you as a member of this or that social class, creating in its wake totally imaginary resistances and making the problem of transition from a culture of confrontation to a holistic one all the more difficult. In fact, the Indian manager's Western orientation and his inability to deal with sophisticated concepts in a language other than English has created quite a false situation in our industry. One result is that the behavioural science approach is being increasingly reduced to a veneer of wisdom rather than wisdom itself.

Labour-Management Relations

Generally speaking, labour-management relations have followed their own course in different parts of the world. In the USA, even during the late 19th century, the worker did not have the benefit of minimum wage or maximum hour legislation. Although the earliest unions appeared at the end of the 18th century, soon after the country's independence, these were ephemeral organisations in larger cities. The employers did not recognise these organisations and, therefore, the unions did not engage in collective bargaining in the modern sense. Neither could they really protect the rights of their members. After a while, these trade unions banded together to form the American Federation of Labour (AFL) and the AFL has survived in altered forms down to the present day. The passage of the National Labour Relations Act put the government's stamp of approval on collective bargaining and was thus a landmark in the history of unions

in the USA. It is in this context that Galbraith propounded the theory of 'countervailing power' that pertains to the relative bargaining strength of employers and workers in which labour and management generally strive to maintain a balance of power.

The present strategy of industrial relations in the USA, particularly since the early 1980s, however, has been that the management is on the offensive vis-à-vis the unions. Under the New Industrial Relations (NIR), the management is of the view that unions cost too much and interfere too much. As a consequence, the membership of the unions has been decreasing since 1980. Between 1980 and 1985, at a time when wage and salary employment increased by 7 million, union membership declined by about 3.1 million. At the microlevel however, Michael Massing has drawn upon cases of the United Auto Workers (UAW) joining hands with the management in creating a climate of working relations based on trust and co-operation.

The scenario of the management being on the offensive vis-à-vis the union, however, holds true, by and large, in the USA as well as in most of the Western industrialised countries, except West Germany. Labour-management relations in West Germany are based on trust and mutual understanding and the powers and functions given to the works councils and the supervisory boards. These supervisory boards are the supreme decision making body and have equal representation of workers and shareholders of the enterprises. The works councils are more or less like the works committees of India. However, the works councils in West Germany are carrying on the process of industrial democracy in the true sense of the term.

The Indian scene

It is a truism that the 'master-servant' relationship was an essential part of the industrial relations scene in India before independence. The British trade union movement later had a significant impact. Without getting into its Benthamite or

Marxian lineage, one might only mention that this stream was responsible for Indian trade unions retaining their confrontational character and their affiliations with political parties. (While Fred Munson may plead for politics-free unions, the fact in India is that unions have strong political affiliations.) This, in turn, led to a multiplicity of unions as well as a large body of labour laws relating to wage boards, cost of living, job classifications, retrenchment, bonus, contract labour and so on. Out of this background has grown a particular manner of collective bargaining in which multiple unions confront a single management.

The above setting has led to two distinct approaches to the management of human resources as far as Indian managers are concerned. First, the behavioural approach takes the human side of the enterprise as a whole and tries to draw upon the concepts of group dynamics, conflict resolution, etc., which are directed at breaking the psychological rather than economic barriers.

The second approach is dialectic and views human systems basically as face-to-face configurations that lead to inevitable conflict between management and workers. This, one might say, is what has led to the ubiquitous distinction in India between the personnel function and the industrial relations function, the managerial class and the worker class. And here lie the roots of the dichotomy that has led to the metamorphosis of the Indian manager into the 'Brown Sahib' of today and in turn to the sharp cleavage between the culture of the shop floor and that of the board room.

The present Indian industrial relations system is in a state of stalemate, largely because the management has never shown genuine desire to open a dialogue with workers or negotiate matters of common interest with them. Collective bargaining has been tried at a very superfluous level. There is an absence of comprehensive legislation, which can provide speedy justice to workers at reasonable costs. The functioning of the unions is in disarray and their

effectiveness, in terms of providing genuine benefits to their members, is limited. Inter-union rivalry, outside leadership and strong political affiliations have contributed to the unions' lack of impact.

Government, of late, has once again attempted to bring about workers' participation in industry (the Constitution of India was amended in 1976 to include it as a directive principle) and an internal grievance handling system (legislation was effected in 1983 making it obligatory for industry to introduce the system). Both these legislations could not be implemented, however, due to lack of agreement over representation of workers on these committees. The Standing Labour Committee, which is the apex tripartite policy-making body on all issues concerning the working class, met, though after a long time, in 1986, but could not take major decisions due to absence of clarity over the mode of achieving the objectives.

As far as the future is concerned, in addition to the problems that currently shackle our feet, we shall also have to face the challenge of a new industrial revolution that seems to be in the offing. Discoveries of microelectronics, microbiology, outer space, etc., promise to have the profoundest impact on the life-style of mankind. Robotics, for example, is already making concepts like "set-up time" and "assembly line" obsolete. Job classification, work allocation, and organisational structure are having to be rethought from scratch. Even the marketing function is going through a fundamental reconsideration that, some claim, may result in its abolition altogether.

Although investment in conventional forms of industry is still far below what prevails in the advanced countries, the impact of the new industrial revolution may come in much more sharply than we are prone to concede. However, the situation also gives us the opportunity to leap-frog centuries and go straight on to the new modes of industrial production.

Conclusion

In this great transformation and in the present context of the industrial relations scene, the role of the Indian manager has become more challenging and demanding. He must realise that he cannot play this role so long as he continues to cling to the self-image of the 'Brown Sahib'. Although he may learn from his Western intellectual groomings, experience has shown that their applicability to Indian problems is limited.

The manager may in all earnestness introduce works councils or put workers on the board of governors, but it is questionable if he will get the same co-operation and suggestions which management in West Germany is getting. Should his priority then be creating structures only, or giving top priority to the task of education and training of workers? Should he also not try to improve the organisation climate? Should he not shift the emphasis from law and legislation to development of mutual relations? All these and many more issues facing the Indian manager may not be resolved unless he inculcates the values acquired through our rich heritage. We need not over-emphasise their importance. Western social scientists have also always propagated the importance of values for the managers so as to be effective on the job.

Values are considered as highly general attitudes that define a person's orientation towards life in terms of things he deems most important. It has also been established by Allport, Vernon and Lindzey, and Hodgkinson that managerial action, planning, motivation are all directly related to the values of the managers. However, the Indian professional manager at present does not show much moralistic orientation. Dhingra's study is one of the few which found that some of the public sector managers do have this orientation and show it while in action. It is all the more important, therefore, that the Indian manager learns and imbibes the values of the traditions and cultural heritage of India.

Furthermore, the manager must make an effort to appreciate the common historical, cultural and political background out of which he and his workmen come. Like managers elsewhere, he must have a common aspiration with his workers, if the idea of belonging to a common heritage has any meaning at all. Only then would both workers and managers be speaking on the same plane and be more effective in coping with the challenges of the present and the great transformation which is coming about.

RAJA RAMANNA

Philosophy for a New Age

It is by a series of fortunate circumstances that P.N. Haksar and I have been in close touch with each other for over a long period of time. The first time I met him was when he was Counsellor in London. A friend of mine and I had been referred to him by Krishna Menon, so that he could solve the problem of who would pay for our return to India, something that Homi Bhabha would not commit himself to though we had been Atomic Energy scholars for a year.

At that meeting, he was most friendly to us and read all the papers we fed him with. One of them was a letter from Bhabha describing the excellent quality of the Geiger counters being produced at the newly formed Tata Institute of Fundamental Research. Haksar was deeply impressed and, having been a physics student of M.N. Saha, understood the significance of the achievement in the India of 1949. We, in turn, were surprised to find such a sympathetic administrator with a feeling for science. Ever since those days, his varied interests and the many important positions he has held have kept us in close communion with each other; be it as our Ambassador in Vienna and, therefore, our

representative on the International Atomic Energy Agency; as member of the Atomic Energy Commission; or as one of the makers of the policy which led to the Pokhran nuclear explosion.

It is not that we agreed with each other on all subjects all the time; on the contrary, we disagreed forcefully on many issues, inasmuch as we concurred on many others. Be that as it may, it is where we disagreed that remains the most interesting part of our long association and this is what I will write about as my tribute to an affectionate friend and a great Indian of our times. Our differences, based essentially on our attitude to life, began to show up after a symposium on Scientific Temper held in October, 1980 at the Nehru Centre, Bombay. There were many scientists present, both distinguished and undistinguished, members of the Nehru Centre, and a select number of the people who were committed to the manifesto on Scientific Temper. A document had been prepared by Haksar himself and some of the Swamijis of the Ramakrishna Mission, many of whom had written on science and Vedantic thoughts, the most important among them being Swami Ranganathananda. The symposium was also open to the public.

As could be expected, the views of the participants were polarised even before the symposium started. The more left-minded participants, and they included those who express strong Marxist views, but adopt a life-style far removed from what they express, had essentially come to convert the others. There were many versed in the older literature and could quote Sanskrit *slokas* with such ease that it made those of us who could not, only jealous of their erudition. It was not clear whether the quotations were relevant to the argument, but these created the necessary atmosphere. Sanskrit is such an iridescent language that to get at the exact meaning is in itself an achievement. In the past, it was made possible only through the commentator or guru and this is perhaps the reason why India has the reputation of being a country which has produced a larger number of commentators than

original works.

Haksar took the view that science is so self-contained and comprehensive that spirituality, as we know it, is unnecessary and, particularly as practised in India, it gives rise to backwardness of all types. Not unexpectedly, Swami Ranganathananda took the Vivekananda view that there is no conflict between science and spirituality, if one takes the Vedantic spirit of the latter. Both views had their supporters. There were a number of college boys with strong leftist leanings present and they even went the very next day to the press to condemn spirituality. The symposium ended just where it started, except for an enhanced feeling of bitterness on both sides and a general view, somewhat arrogantly expressed, that the correct and only answers were on the side of science.

It now became the difficult task of the organisers to prepare the summary of the symposium, a task beyond the capabilities of any of the official recorders. A highly competent lady from Madras undertook this function, but as her views were somewhat polarised to the left and she was not herself a scientist by training, the summary was not sufficiently comprehensive and could not be taken as an official record. In a moment of rashness, I undertook to prepare another aspect of the summary hoping it to be more balanced and sent it to Haksar for his reaction. Then came the reply from him which, as far as I know, was the strongest worded one from a man who always said things in a strong way. It tore my views and reviews to bits. However, at the end were expressed the same words of affection and regard.

I recently returned from Hannover after attending an international conference on the subject of "Mind and Nature", at which I had been invited to speak on "Indian Holistic Experience and Analytical Rationality".¹ It seemed as though the very conference had been arranged as a response to the exchange of letters Haksar and I had had a few years earlier, but now taking into account the latest discoveries of science.

Of the nearly 50 papers read at the conference, the ones relevant to our discussion were the papers of the Nobel laureate, Prigogine, the well known physicist, and Eccles, the distinguished brain physiologist. My own paper fitted into the scheme of things. There were many other excellent presentations but lack of space here forbids me from making reference to them.

It is the view of several biologists that the symmetries they have observed in living cells are so encouraging that they can claim that, in a few years, we will have understood everything about life and evolution on a molecular basis. However, we know from past experience that a satisfactory explanation of one branch of knowledge does not necessarily mean an understanding of all aspects of knowledge. The success of classical physics is a typical example of this type in explaining many aspects of the observable world and yet we know that the Quantum Theory is necessary with its completely new and somewhat “contradictory” principles for obtaining a more comprehensive understanding of nature. Here again, efforts to overcome the contradictions of Quantum Mechanics have not succeeded and scientists are being forced to live in paradoxes and inconsistencies hoping for the creation of a more logical and complete theory of nature. Some scientists have even advocated the inclusion of a separate non-physical entity, the “mind”, to overcome this problem, fully aware of the fact that such an inclusion in physics would mean the loss of status to science as an objective universal theory of all observable phenomena.

Physics has been defined in the last century as the science of measurement and claims to explain all phenomena, including life-processes, on the basis that all phenomena are purely mechanistic in nature. In my paper, I had pointed out that the continued controversy on the foundations of Quantum Mechanics is making people feel that it has reached a state of saturation as to what science can achieve. We may feel that we have understood all knowledge by choosing only those problems which can be solved by the

theory which we may think is right, i.e., Quantum Mechanics, and reject the rest of knowledge as irrelevant or as not problems at all. It is an old observation that we may never understand the real origins of human consciousness as the very methods of observation may destroy the phenomena. In other words, they may fall into the classification of non-measurable phenomena, i.e., outside the present methods of science.

The word “measurement” is derived from the Indo-Aryan root *ma* leading to the Greek word *metron* and the Sanskrit word *matra*. Besides, I have verified that even the word *maya* has the same derivative and could mean “immeasurable” or “illusory”. In other words, there are aspects of knowledge which are measurable (in the sense used in science) and parts which are immeasurable. One such could be, e.g., the non-programmable part of our consciousness. The Uncertainty Principle and virtual processes in microscopy indicate a limit to measurable phenomena as it appears from physics itself. It suggests that many physical phenomena exist which are in the regions of the immeasurable and unobservable and, therefore, beyond science.

Further, if one studies the evolution of the mind in humans, the time span for such molecular changes to take place seems too short according to the laws of probability. Eccles, in his paper² from a study of recently discovered fossils, comes to this view. He further takes the matter to the extreme in suggesting that it looks as though some sort of a divine element is necessary to explain the new facts. Perhaps, this is taking matters too far and most of those present would have been content if he had just said that we do not understand the workings of the brain or evolutionary processes with our present tools of scientific investigation.

The other paper by Prigogine³ was on the nature of time. His presentation was well within the disciplines of science, and what he said was most thought-provoking. He started with a quotation from Eddington who is supposed to have

said that if one wishes to bridge the gap between science and our spiritual aspect, time holds the cue.

In Newtonian physics, time is absolute running smoothly from eternity to eternity, but we know that this is not so. Einstein has shown that time is relative to different observers. We also know that time is directly connected with the descent from order to chaos, i.e., the second law of thermodynamics and processes of irreversibility. However, recent discoveries have shown that nature exhibits reversibility and irreversibility at the same time and all this has profound consequences on the very meaning of time. How then do we reconcile the observed irreversibility with fundamental reversibility? It is strange but true that in irreversible processes order appears suddenly as a result of instabilities and fluctuations. These seem to arise spontaneously. What one would have considered as something fully in our control, with all our knowledge of physics, suddenly becomes independent of us and we lose control.

In cosmology, the big bang itself seems to have come about by some such instabilities, though it involves such complicated processes, as a Quantum Vacuum with virtual processes taking place in it, leading to black holes and the latter to matter and life. In whatever picture we now have, absolute time loses all significance and eternity itself finds no place, since time can start again and again.

If, by science, we mean analytical rationality and it has led to the philosophical position as described above, it is quite relevant to consider holistic experience also to get at the truth. Truth does not become apparent only by the methods of analytical rationality. Sankara, Ramanuja and, in more recent times, Srinivas Ramanujan have shown that we can arrive at generalities not only by using logic and mathematics in the formal and rigorous sense.

As is well known, Indian holistic experience divides the Universe into three parts — *chit*, *achit* and *aswara*, i.e., a set of things which possess consciousness, a set of things which is inanimate, and God. It is to be noted that the

Vedantic definition of God is somewhat close to the concept of grand unification of all the laws of physics and not as an anthropomorphic entity. It has been shown that the possibility of having a complete unification of all physics comes from symmetries and the symmetry of symmetries can be associated with the Vedantic Supreme Brahman. As is well known in physics, departures from symmetries also determine the laws of nature. In Advaitic terms, this is termed as *maya* and *maya* had indeed been defined by Yaskha as: the urge of God to bring the world into “measurement” from a state where it is beyond measurement. Sayana and all other commentators follow the same meaning. Sankara’s interpretation of the *easwara* set, which is close to the quantum mechanical view, has been commented upon by many distinguished scientists like Erwin Schrodinger and others. Quantum Mechanics indicates that there is a break in the possibility of a measuremental interpretation in the understanding of nature resulting from the Uncertainty Principle.

On origins, the *Chandogya Upanishad* has the following to say:

...though some hold that chaos alone was before a second, and order came of it, how can it ever be so. Order indeed was alone in the beginning....

This again has echoes in modern physics.

As defined above, the Supreme Brahman is a physical abstract object, pure, symmetrical and sterile. Being so, it can only project (i.e. through illusion) and not create. Ramanuja (12th century) takes the view that it is only from chaos symmetry must have developed. In such a case, a new property develops in that the Supreme Brahman begins to care for that which it has created as everything is now, real and not illusory. Showing humanitarian feeling and caring for others is as much a law of thermodynamics as any other. Uncertainty in physics is the first sign of departure from

measurability, and it is again immeasurability which separates life processes from humanitarian impulses.

It is quite likely that Haksar will not agree with much of what has been written above. In any case, it is a good thing to have controversies with great minds.

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Part II

ALICE THORNER

Portrait of the Diplomat as an Earnest Young Man

“Haksar”, called Krishna Menon from the other end of the room, “talk to these Americans”. Near the window looking out onto the Strand a slim young man left his post at the hand-operated mimeograph machine and came to greet us. This took place in July, 1939, in the London office of the India League, from which Krishna Menon, with the help of a dedicated band of Indian students, dispatched a steady stream of statements to the press, leaflets, and speakers for trade union and local Labour Party meetings all over Britain.

Daniel and I were newly married, newly arrived after the thrill of our first Atlantic crossing, newly settled in a chilly Bloomsbury basement. Daniel had been awarded a fellowship to dig in the India Office archives for his projected doctorate on the initial 19th century investment in the Indian railways. His acquaintance with India rested uniquely upon what he had gleaned from the parliamentary papers and other materials available in New York — for example, he had gone through everything Marx and Engels

wrote for the *New York Herald* at the time of the 1857 Rebellion. But he had never seen a live Indian; all I knew about India's history had been gleaned from the film in which Paul Muni played Disraeli.

The next thing we knew Haksar had invited us to dinner in the flat he shared with K.T. Chandy on a neat residential street in the northwest district. The kitchen was tiny, so as Haksar finished preparing one dish after another, he brought out the cooking pots and set them in a row on the parlour floor. I don't recall much else in that room in the way of furniture. In addition to the full array of Kashmiri specialties, Haksar had prepared a pudding, a superior variety of the English trifle. There were several other guests, students from different parts of India. On that or a similar occasion, we observed that the ones from the south like Chandy took recourse to jars of pungent pickles from home since Haksar's flavourful cuisine was not spicy enough for them!

Like Haksar and Chandy most of our new friends were reading for the bar. Their social origins were also similar as the great majority of their fathers were doctors, engineers, jurists or educators, well off enough to send their sons to England, but not to support them in lavish style. Haksar, he told us, had earlier studied social anthropology with Malinowski at the London School of Economics, and had written a thesis based on field work in a rural area of Madhya Pradesh, where his father was stationed as a magistrate. He talked to us about his findings, and emphasised that the endogenous groups he actually found in the villages were much more varied than the classic brahmin-kshatriya-vaisya-shudra categorisation to which everyone else referred.

As compared with the exiguity of our own classical foundations (little Latin and no Greek) we were awed by Haksar's training in Persian as well as Sanskrit. We were astounded to hear that he had not gone to school at all before his twelfth year. Yet he was thoroughly familiar with the English language, literature, history and sociology as well as

with current developments on the international scene.

Sometimes the company that came together at Haksar's, in inexpensive eating houses or in our Gower Street apartment, included Peter Keunemann from Ceylon and his beautiful Austrian refugee wife. Sometimes Mohan Kumaramangalam and his sister Parvati came down from Cambridge. Discussion, usually political, was our standard form of amusement; among the recurrent topics were Subhas Bose, who was a great favourite, Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi, Stafford Cripps' interventions in the House of Commons, the arrogance of the Chamberlain Tories, the shock of the Russo-German pact. Haksar and Chandy patiently explained to us the differences between princely states and British provinces, the intricacies of the Constitution of 1935, the background to the outbreaks of violence between Hindus and Muslims. The independent India of the future — as painted for us by her devoted sons — took shape as a land from which poverty, communal strife and caste distinctions would rapidly disappear. The prospect of partition was in no way envisaged. Nor did population present itself as a problem. Smallness of size of cultivation units would be taken care of by co-operative farming. Exactly how independence was to be achieved was not altogether clear. Often at 11 p.m. we gathered in the Strand Corner House to listen while Krishna Menon sipped his hot milk and commented on the day's developments. Or we sat at the feet of K.S. Shelvankar, then the *Hindu* correspondent, to hear his cool interpretations.

The German invasion of Poland, sparking off Britain's declaration of war at the beginning of September, had only minor repercussions on our life-style. We were all issued gas masks and taped up our window panes so that the light would not show out at night along the edges of the curtains. As Daniel and I enlarged the scope of our friendships, Haksar and Chandy became part of a circle which included Miles, a British writer whose recorder carried a notch for each of the battles he had fought as a member of the

International Brigade in Spain; Suaja, a talented textile designer from Dresden; Pauline, an art student who had taken up a war job as a forewoman in a factory; Mark, a Bond Street tailor who had arrived in London from Eastern Europe via the Argentine; Miriam, who helped Claude Cockburn put out his influential left-wing newsletter; Leonard, an American journalist; a handful of teachers in the Workers' Education Association; and old George, who had been an Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) organiser in Canada and the U.S. before serving as a Comintern agent in Germany and China. We went walking on weekends over Hampstead Heath, drank innumerable cups of tea and pints of beer, attended public meetings in Red Lion Square until they were forbidden by government, fearful that a German bombing raid might kill a substantial number of people at a go, with disastrous effect upon morale.

When we left to return to the U.S. at the end of April, 1940, the hot war had not yet begun. On a suitably foggy morning Haksar came along with us to the Tilbury dock from which we were to sail for France. We exchanged tearful farewells since he was convinced that we would never meet again.

This proved as unrealistic as our other expectations. By the autumn of 1944 Daniel had arrived in Delhi as a railway specialist in the United States Lend-Lease mission sent out by Roosevelt to assess India's requirements for the pursuit of the Allied war effort. Haksar came up by train from Allahabad, where he was practising law, to put Daniel in touch with his sister, Saraswati, whose husband was stationed in Delhi as an officer of the Northern Railway, and his uncle who presided over a musical and literary salon in the back room of his household linens shop, Pandit Brothers, in Connaught Place. Daniel was quickly adopted as an auxiliary family member, whose enthusiasm over their meals was highly appreciated by the two households, each rightfully proud of the quality of its cuisine. When he visited the Allahabad home, Daniel was able to meet Haksar's

mother, warmly hospitable despite her very limited command of English, as well as Urmila, the outspoken young distant cousin then serving (I believe) as a labour officer in a factory, who later became Haksar's wife. Haksar also introduced Daniel to his good friend from London who had already left before we arrived there, H.M. Trivedi, who had been seconded to government from the Scindia Shipping Corporation.

Over the Christmas holidays in 1945, by which time I had managed to join Daniel, we undertook an extensive road trip. Leaving Delhi in Daniel's army jeep, we picked up Haksar at the railway junction near Agra, and headed for Bombay, visiting Ellora and Ajanta on the way. We put up in Byculla with the Chandys and their two small sons. Chandy was working in a legal capacity with Lever Brothers. He showed us many features of the city: the mill district where we witnessed the changing of shifts — the stream which poured out of the textile factories in those days included a mass of white-saried women operatives; a low-ceilinged loft where men were busily rolling *bidis* at an advanced hour of the night; P.C. Joshi's plain living-high thinking communist *ashram*; an exhibition of paintings at the J.J. School of Art; the India Coffee House in Fort where intellectuals gathered, and the more fashionable Parisian Dairy on the Bay front; the Opera House cinema compound where a film about the Bengal famine, *Dharti ke Lal* (Children of the Earth), was being shot by K.A. Abbas of the famous Indian People's Theatre; and Balraj Sahni's modest bungalow in the Theosophical Colony on the beach at Juhu. Haksar was already familiar with Bombay and enjoyed revisiting known people and spots.

It was also by jeep that Daniel and I left Delhi in February, 1946, since we were scheduled to take ship from Calcutta. By great good fortune our halt in Allahabad coincided with the *Magh Mela*. Haksar guided us to the confluence, identifying for us the various groups of pilgrims, priests and *pandas*. He told us the apocryphal story of Ram, converted by a

Christian missionary, who was appalled to see him the next morning on the way to the Ganges with his *lota*. "Ram", called the missionary, "you are a Christian now. Why are you going down to the river?" "Just because I'm a Christian", replied Ram, "does that mean I have to give up my religion?" Haksar also took us along to the home of one of the senior members of the Allahabad bar for Saraswati Puja celebration.

At his house Haksar had in his employ a tall fine-looking youth. He mentioned to us that this servant was devoted to him because he had successfully defended him in court against a charge of robbery. But was he actually guilty, I asked. That, said Haksar, is not the business of the lawyer to know. Haksar enjoyed the practice of law and was doing relatively well in the profession in Allahabad, which he considered to be his native place, and where he was able to maintain a pleasant home for his mother and various other relatives. At the same time he felt constrained by the stuffy provincialism of the town. He had joined an amateur dramatic group, and had been chosen to play the poet in Shaw's *Candida*. But after a few rehearsals he felt he had to relinquish the role since he could not show himself in public with his head in the lap of the young Englishwoman who acted the leading role. He also yearned to conquer new intellectual disciplines — I recall his mentioning Physics. And I suspect that he missed the excitement of his years of political activity in England.

After our brief stop in Allahabad, Haksar rode along with us down the dusty Grand Trunk Road as far as Gaya. This time our goodbyes were said at the railway station; we slept in the waiting room since he had to catch an early morning train back to Allahabad. As six years earlier at Tilbury dock, he was disconsolate because he could not imagine that our lives would ever come together again.

The next time we heard his voice was in fact barely a year and a half later, when he telephoned from New York, where he had just landed as a member of the Indian mission to the

United Nations on the Kashmir case. After a cataclysmic dismemberment, India had taken its place as an independent nation, and Haksar had embarked upon his career as a diplomat and public servant.

ARTHUR GAVSHON

The P.N. Haksar I Know

Parmeshwar Narain Haksar once described himself as “a wanderer through life and a kind of spiritual vagrant”. As a matter of record his wanderings have been worldwide. And his vagrancy, whether spiritual or temporal, also has been distinguished by its universality.

My first meeting with Haksar 40 years ago could have been the start of a series of adversarial contests because, on the face of things, our interests may have seemed to be in conflict. For I was the diplomatic correspondent of an international news service searching for information, particularly about India, the new nation-state whose policies and directions in a changing world commanded serious attention. And he then was the First Secretary/Counsellor chosen personally by Jawaharlal Nehru to watch, analyse and report on political and diplomatic developments in the capital of the former imperial power. The job of an investigative journalist is to unearth any secrets that may lie behind the political scenes; but a diplomat's duty is to safeguard the confidences that come his way and to pass them on to his government.

As it happened, that initial encounter set off one of the

most rewarding relationships of my life. Rewarding not only in the sense that it was to become a true and lasting friendship; but also because there was so much to learn from the depth and range of his knowledge and perceptions of life and history and people. Haksar for me always has been far more than the cool diplomat, the complete political sophisticate, the embodiment of moral man. Even while remaining the lucid teacher he never stopped being the thinking scholar who would go back to his books if uncertainties ever bothered him.

Everything living seems to interest Haksar. He has remained in the mainstream of Indian, European and in fact international intellectual thought since his student days in the London of the 1930s. He trained as a barrister but also read science and economics, mastered mathematics and the great Bronislaw Malinowski wanted him to become an anthropologist. For him science and technology, law and history, music and the arts, the motives of men and governments, the condition of the people of India and beyond, and the affairs of nations are part of a whole and he knows much about all of them. Yet he always has had time and the ability to make the most complex problem seem simple.

He has his principles and not even a Prime Minister can persuade him to bend them. Politicians may describe this as obstinacy whereas others would see it as integrity. He has gathered many friends — and rarely loses them — and yet for a newcomer he is not easy to get to know. Perhaps this is because the range of his interests and activities leaves him little time to invest in anything but tested relationships. He is intolerant of what might be called impolite behaviour. Once I was talking in his presence with his former High Commissioner, the late Krishna Menon. Krishna was in the habit of taking some pills to sleep at night and others to keep him awake during the day. Sometimes he took the wrong pills. While we were talking he suddenly dozed off which was hardly a tribute to my conversation. Whatever the reason Haksar kicked his High Commissioner on the shin

under the table. Krishna woke up with a start. And the conversation continued with Haksar trying hard not to smile.

In a land as vast as India, sadly still torn by caste and creed and communalism, even the most liberated individuals are made aware constantly of their roots and identities. Haksar's antecedents were Kashmiri Brahmins who quit the lovely valley in the early 19th century. The mini-exodus took various branches of the family to the plains of India; some to Delhi and Indore, others to Gwalior, the old Central Provinces and the Punjab. They soon assimilated, learning new languages and adopting new codes, forgetting those they had left behind. Haksar himself was born in Gujranwala, in the Punjab, reared and educated first in the Central Provinces, later in Allahabad where he went to university.

His early upbringing was very traditional. Because his father, a magistrate, was subject to frequent transfers he did not attend school until he was 13 but was tutored at home. From his mother he learned Hindi; from his father Urdu and later, at the age of ten, was introduced to Sanskrit. Parental influence plainly was strong yet even as a boy Haksar was his own person. He was only eight when, for the first time, he switched on an electric light. The magic of electricity fascinated him and he could get no explanation of it from his father or mother. It was no accident, then, that he elected to study science as one of his university subjects. Once he recalled that he used to fast every full moon day just as his mother was in the habit of doing. "This I did until I was 15", he related. "Then I read of Gautama's experience of fasting. It brought him no enlightenment but only caused him to faint. And so I gave up fasting."

Times were turbulent in India during Haksar's formative years. Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru were on the move. The struggle for Independence was intensifying. The disparate people of the subcontinent were awakening to the drumbeats of nationhood. There was a rallying to the banners of a long-

awaited freedom. In thought and study and travel through the far reaches of the country Haksar was preparing himself for the roles he ultimately would play. He spoke briefly of his discovery of India — and himself — on October 19, 1976, when he delivered the convocation address at the University of Kashmir, Srinagar.

I stood at our land's end. I saw waves upon waves of the Indian Ocean eagerly rushing to meet the Arabian Sea. I canoed over the transparent back waters of Kerala between Kottayam and Alleppey and smelt the fragrance of cardamom and pepper; I saw the graceful arecanut and coconut palms swaying in the gales; I saw the lush green coffee, tea and rubber plantations. And then wandering from Thekaddy to Coimbatore, thence to Mysore and Mercara, contemplating the beauty of the Nilgiris I became possessive about the Southern part of our country as I was of its Northern, Eastern and Western and Central. India thus became a reality and not an abstraction.

On this mother earth of India, our ancestors had laboured and created a fabric of civilisation weaving together its various threads. The monuments alone which they built and carved and chiselled kept me enthralled. The temple at Martand, the mosques, the forts, the city at Fatehpur Sikri, the caves and frescoes at Ajanta, the temples in Konarak, Khajuraho and Madurai, the Taj at Agra, the ruins of Hampi — all showed the creativity of our forefathers. And I feel possessive about them as I feel about the entire land so laden with the gifts of Nature.

I respond to the songs and dances, the music and folk rhythms of our country. I am moved by Tagore as by Iqbal; I am moved by reading Kural and Vallathol, even in their translation. The chanting of Vedic hymns and of Zend-Avesta stirs my soul as does the haunting call of a muezzin's *azan* at the dawn.

Thus the descendant of Sita Ram (Haksar's ancestor) returned to the land of his forefathers transformed. I first

set eyes on this valley in 1968. And I came here to attend a meeting of the National Integration Council. And though I could, even with my closed eyes, see Kanyakumari from Dachigam and feel the restlessness of the waves of the Indian Ocean pining to meet the waves of the Arabian Sea, the mountains of the valley blocked the view for many. And I said to myself: 'Oh! So much remains to be done!' And it remains to be done all over this land of ours. So many still see reality distorted by caste and creed, region and language.

Those were the words of a mature Indian who dreams and works for the day when all his countrymen will rise above the conflicts that for centuries have entrapped them — and instead will identify themselves with the cause and concept of a united, thriving India. Indeed that was the vision Haksar took with him when he left Allahabad in the late 1930s to continue his studies at the London School of Economics. For very soon he became actively involved in the work of the India League under Krishna Menon. In those days the role of the League formed a significant part of the struggle for Indian independence. Krishna's aim was to prepare British public opinion for the transfer of power and, to a degree, he fulfilled that aim. The political and industrial wings of the British labour movement committed themselves to support the struggle and, in fact, carried out that commitment soon after the first post-war Labour government took office.

Krishna made full use of Haksar's speaking talents in the League's campaigning; he would address meetings of students, factory workers, trade unionists and Labour Party members up and down England, Scotland and Wales. The mission also brought him into contact with Britons of all classes and political shades with whom he exchanged ideas and thoughts on major issues of war and peace, poverty and wealth, the past and the future, life and death, love and hate; but a constant thread running through the pattern of his time in London related to the nature of nationhood, its

origins, its elements, its links with social, economic and even psychological forces. The subject gripped him for its relevance to India's yesterdays, today's and tomorrow's.

It was, perhaps, inevitable that Jawaharlal Nehru should appoint Krishna Menon as India's first High Commissioner to London after independence. Equally inevitable was that Krishna and the Prime Minister should decide that Haksar should join the High Commission staff. So it was that he abandoned his barrister's practice at the Allahabad High Court to begin a distinguished career in government service that has taken him to the major power centres of the world.

The ascetic Menon possessed a wisdom and wit that fellow envoys and politicians did not always appreciate and there were times when he became a subject of international controversy. Haksar, though, has always regarded him as a mentor. "What little I learnt about the art and science of diplomacy, it was at his feet", he recalled when Menon died in October, 1974. "From him I learnt the art of negotiation. I learnt from him that in diplomacy the most important thing was courage, a non-negotiable sense of dedication to the interests of one's country; a capacity to see what your opponent has in mind and to discern whether there was a basis for linking your opponent's concern with your own." He tells with relish the story of how an important ambassador, knowing that Krishna was a vegetarian, argued the case for eating meat because of its protein value. Clinching his case he said: "After all God has created these animals for human beings." Krishna retorted: "But, your Excellency, God also has created human beings and we do not approve of cannibalism!"

Haksar's assessments of the British political scene and of international developments quickly marked him for higher things. He was seconded as political adviser to the Neutral Nations' Repatriation Commission in Korea which India chaired and his role in the peacemaking process on the peninsula was notable. On his return to New Delhi from London he was made spokesman for India's ministry of

External Affairs at a crucial period in the mid-1950s when East-West cold war antagonisms were making the world a dangerous place. Later, Nehru appointed him joint secretary in charge of administration in the External Affairs ministry. For a while he was India's representative on a United Nations committee reviewing the world body's global information services. In 1960, the Year of Africa, when key countries of the continent achieved freedom, he was sent to Nigeria as High Commissioner. He helped develop close links between India and the largest state in black Africa. Next he became Ambassador to neutral Austria and, concurrently, India's delegate to the International Atomic Energy Agency. His final foreign service appointment was as Deputy and Acting High Commissioner in London where he was the effective head of India's biggest overseas mission.

Indira Gandhi became India's third Prime Minister in January, 1966, succeeding Lal Bahadur Shastri on his death. She summoned Haksar back to New Delhi to head her secretariat. He had known her as a small girl and later as a student; and he knew Feroze Gandhi, her late husband, too. Under his direction the Prime Minister's Secretariat soon came to be regarded as the Government of India's central policy-making organ and Haksar himself emerged as her principal adviser.

The lady who came to be known as the Empress of India was a shrewd politician but lacked her father's vision and respect for the parliamentary system. Her inexperience initially marred her premiership as when less than six months after assuming office she devalued the rupee under World Bank pressure. There were other setbacks. The Congress majority was cut back severely in the 1967 general elections and, against her will, Mrs. Gandhi was compelled to accept Morarji Desai as Deputy Prime Minister. A long-brewing crisis in the Congress party culminated in a split two years later. In December, 1970, Mrs. Gandhi dissolved Parliament and called mid-term elections. In this situation

deft handling of the problems was essential and, according to Indian insiders aware of what was going on, it was Haksar more than anyone else who guided the Prime Minister through her difficulties. She took the fight to her Old Guard opponents with a programme laced with socialist measures which included nationalisation of the banks and cancellation of privileges long enjoyed by India's erstwhile princes. Campaigning on an "Eradicate Poverty" ticket she won a two-thirds majority of seats in the Lok Sabha in March, 1971. The Empress had arrived.

But that same month came signs of the gathering storm that would change the political landscape of the Indian subcontinent: the storm that provided Haksar full scope for the exercise of his political and diplomatic skills. In the process he was instrumental in enabling Mrs. Gandhi to establish her supremacy for some years and India's pre-eminence in the subcontinent.

Pakistan's military ruler Gen. Yahya Khan ordered his army to crush an upsurge of Bengali nationalism in the country's eastern wing. A consequence of the punitive expedition was that millions of Bengalis fled for their lives into Indian territory and India faced the task of sheltering, clothing and feeding them. Yahya Khan felt he could count on the support of the U.S. administration which for years then, as now, pursued a policy of tilting towards its Pakistan ally to the concern of the non-aligned Indians.

As a counter to President Nixon's backing of Pakistan Mrs. Gandhi in August signed a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation with the Soviet Union. It was not a military pact even if some U.S. authorities saw it as such but its effect was to give Washington pause. Nixon and his National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger were preoccupied at the time with organising their opening to China and Kissinger in his memoirs has made plain they feared any dilution of support for Pakistan might wreck that enterprise because the Chinese and Pakistanis were close. They feared too that Mrs. Gandhi's government was contemplating the

dismemberment of all Pakistan. It turned out to be a misplaced fear. Haksar accompanied Mrs. Gandhi to Washington early November in the hope of disabusing the President and Kissinger of their suspicions but the talks achieved little; another Indian aim was to get Nixon to persuade Yahya Khan to permit the return of the refugees in conditions of safety because their continued presence on Indian soil carried dangers of communal violence. The climax came in early December when the Pakistani Air Force unleashed what was intended to be a pre-emptive strike against Indian air bases in the west. War thus became inevitable.

The third Indo-Pakistani war lasted just 12 days before the Pakistani commander in Dacca surrendered unconditionally to the surprise of the Americans. Nixon had held back from helping Pakistan militarily; but he did order the U.S. Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal. If the American intention was to scare India it failed badly. Its main effect was to damage Washington's relations with New Delhi for years. The aftermath of the war was the emergence of an independent Republic of Bangladesh and a drastically weakened Pakistan. As for Mrs. Gandhi, her popularity was at a peak until, within a few years, her irrational imperiousness led her to squander the goodwill she had accumulated largely through the work of her Principal Secretary.

Flushed with the political and military triumphs of 1971 the thoughts of the Prime Minister seemed to dwell increasingly on image-building — and not necessarily of her own image. Her younger son Sanjay began to display an interest in politics and governance. He saw himself also as a big-time industrialist after persuading his mother to back his pet project for the production of an all-Indian motor car. He even had a name for it — Maruti meaning "Son of the Wind God" With the Prime Minister's help he organised the licensing, the financing, the site on which the factory was to be established. Soon enough the politicians and the media

got to hear of what was going on and by 1973 and 1974 there were charges of corruption. Overtones of scandal spilled over to tarnish Mrs. Gandhi's own reputation; but she herself disregarded the warnings of friends, advisers and ministerial colleagues.

One of those who sought to limit the damage was Haksar himself. Here is how the BBC staff man stationed in India, Mark Tully, and co-author Zareer Masani portrayed what happened in their recently-published book entitled *From Raj to Rajiv*:

The most alarming development for many of (Mrs. Gandhi's) own supporters was that the cult of personality began to take on an increasingly dynastic flavour. A sure indication of this was the growing influence of her younger son, Sanjay, which led to serious disagreements between Mrs. Gandhi and her Principal Secretary, P.N. Haksar, a man widely respected for his integrity and intellect. Haksar, more than anyone else, had guided her through the difficult days of the party split and the Bangladesh war. But, according to N.K. Seshan, who was the Prime Minister's private secretary, her indulgence of Sanjay eventually led to Haksar's resignation. 'Sanjay was given a free hand', says Seshan, 'and he was totally irresponsible. But she never used to curb him. In the beginning she used to shout at him, but later she didn't bother at all about it. Haksar did not approve of Sanjay's activities at all.'

According to Seshan, Haksar tried hard to warn Mrs. Gandhi about the damage her son was doing and even tried to persuade her with an analogy from the Hindu epic, the *Ramayana*. The hero Lord Rama, he pointed out to her, had been sent into exile for 14 years by his father, so that he could prove himself; and he had returned in triumph. He went on to suggest that she send Sanjay for three years to Kashmir to stop him interfering. But as it turned out, it was Haksar, not Sanjay, she chose to dispense with.

Sanjay was not one to forgive or forget. During the Emergency imposed by his mother in mid-1975 he initiated a campaign of harassment against Haksar's uncles, the Pandit Brothers, then owners of a well-known New Delhi store. The affair distressed Haksar and his family but they bore themselves with dignity throughout knowing the accusations and innuendos spread about them would, when tested, never hold water. After leaving the Prime Minister's Secretariat Haksar continued to serve as Deputy Chairman of India's Planning Commission and as Vice-President of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (both of which were formally presided over by Mrs. Gandhi herself). Thus he remained a significant influence in two crucial areas of national policy-making. He gave up his last state post in 1977 when the Janata government took office despite being invited to stay on.

For the past eleven years Haksar has remained active and energetic in public affairs. He chairs the Indian Statistical Institute, serves on the National Integration Council and has been asked to head a committee formed to review the work of the government's top promotional bodies in the fields of arts and letters, music and theatre.

And all of this at a time when he has had to endure failing vision that has required several delicate surgical episodes.

No account of Haksar, the man, the husband, the father would be complete without recognising the support of his wife Urmila whose integrity and questioning have always been a source of stimulation for him. That is a story of its own.

SUBIMAL DUTT

Diplomat and Administrator

P.N. Haksar joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1948 as a special recruit, an emergency recruit in the official parlance of those days. There is a short history behind the selection of the special recruit. During the British rule the department of External Affairs was almost entirely manned by British officers from the civil and armed services. On the transfer of power in 1947 almost to a man they left for home, a few for the greener pastures of Pakistan. The Foreign Office was in turmoil. I had joined it as Commonwealth Secretary under Prime Minister Nehru in July 1947. Foreign Secretary-designate K.P.S. Menon was still in Nanking. We had already opened embassies in Moscow and Washington; there was no difficulty, of course, in converting the old High Commissioner's establishment in London into a full-fledged diplomatic mission.

Nehru was receiving many pressing requests from other countries for diplomatic missions from India. He had decided to select heads of missions from among senior politicians and others who had made their mark in the fields of education, law, etc. There was, however, a great shortage of

personnel for the middle level posts. It was therefore decided to select a few young people in their 30s who had had a good education and were in professions like teaching, law and industry. Haksar, then a young practising advocate in the Allahabad High Court, was one such recruit. His first post was that of a First Secretary in the Indian High Commission in London under Krishna Menon.

In the Foreign Office the Indian High Commission came within my jurisdiction as Commonwealth Secretary. But my principal occupation in the immediate post-independence period was with the variety of problems arising from the partition of the country. I had little time to give to the organisational problems in the High Commissioner's office or to meet the newly selected officers who were being sent abroad.

During his visits to New Delhi Krishna Menon spoke highly of Haksar's work. We in the Foreign Office had no means of judging the merits of individual officers and I do not recall having met Haksar before he took up his post in London. I met him in May 1949 when I went to London to examine the organisation of the High Commissioner's set-up and to suggest possible avenues of economy on which Parliament had been insisting. I was impressed by his quiet manners and restrained talk. He was obviously keeping himself aloof from the internal squabbles within the High Commission. My visit was brief and I had no opportunity of judging an individual officer's work. Within a year or so, Krishna Menon pressed us to promote Haksar to the rank of Counsellor. Rules about promotion in the civil services are rather rigid and at the earlier stages anyway seniority could not be overlooked. We found it difficult therefore to accept the High Commissioner's suggestion as there were others senior to Haksar. Later, I was informed that Haksar was feeling frustrated and thinking of resigning from service. I was rather alarmed and it was decided to bring him to headquarters.

In the Foreign Office he was placed in charge of the

information wing. It was a relatively small unit in those days. The officer in charge of the division had the important task of meeting Indian and foreign newspaper correspondents who wanted to know about policies of the government on various international issues. It was a difficult task for him in those days, for there was not enough co-ordination between the different divisions within the ministry and he was not always kept informed of official thinking on matters of importance. From all reports, however, Haksar's work and his relations with the newspaper editors and correspondents earned their appreciation. As is well known, newspaper men are very difficult to please.

Haksar was not to be left undisturbed in this assignment for long. By the middle of the 1950s we had diplomatic missions and consular posts in more than 100 countries and these had to be manned at various levels by India-based personnel. The Foreign Office did not have full information about the requirements of the various missions abroad. Rules about posting, allowances, etc., had not yet been standardised and there were complaints from many heads of missions and others concerned about their pay, allowances and housing. On the other hand, most officers wanted postings in the Western countries where the climate was pleasant and life was comfortable. The ambassadors and others were continuously writing direct to me as Foreign Secretary even on small administrative matters but I had little time to attend to them.

It was therefore decided to have a separate division under a senior officer for dealing solely with administrative problems concerning the Foreign Service personnel. Haksar was considered the most suitable person for this important job. He was patient, sympathetic and objective in dealing with matters concerning posting and promotion and with requests for special consideration for a variety of reasons. As Foreign Secretary I could rely on the advice of a person who had no personal favourites. If he recommended any special

consideration for somebody, whoever he might be, an officer, a clerk or a peon, one could be sure that such special consideration was justified.

Haksar gradually reached the requisite seniority in service for the independent charge of a diplomatic mission and was selected for the post of Indian High Commissioner in Nigeria. Most senior officers would express reluctance to accept postings in West Africa because of the harsh climate and the lack of facilities which are available to diplomats in the Western countries. Haksar readily accepted the assignment.

Nigeria became a member of the Commonwealth in 1960 as a Federation. The three different regions of the newly independent country had not yet become fully integrated although none could foresee the terrible civil war which broke out some years later. Haksar's reports from Nigeria were detailed and objective and it was obvious that they were based on deep study and personal observation.

My close connection with the Foreign Office ended in April 1961 when I left for Moscow. I had little contact with Haksar thereafter. I knew that he held several important diplomatic posts with distinction.

I was in Calcutta when the news came that Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi had selected Haksar as her official Secretary. I felt very happy that the Prime Minister would have the advice of a person who would tell her what was right and not what would please her. Also, he would not utilise his important position to promote any special interest and I felt certain that he would keep the hangers-on at a distance. That by itself would be a great service to the country.

I returned to Delhi in May 1968 as Chairman of the Industrial Licensing Policy Enquiry Committee and later became the Central Vigilance Commissioner. In these positions I had little to do with the Prime Minister's Secretary and saw little of him.

Then came the liberation war in East Pakistan in 1971. It was no secret that during those troubled days Haksar and D.P. Dhar were two of Mrs. Gandhi's close advisers, but I had

no personal knowledge of their activities. When the war ended in December 1971, those of us whose original homes were in Bangladesh in the pre-partition days felt particularly happy. I was not, however, prepared for the surprise I had when one morning in February 1972 Haksar told me that Mrs. Gandhi wanted me to go to Dacca as India's first Ambassador to Bangladesh and I would have to leave within four days. Despite some initial hesitation for personal reasons, I agreed.

Then began a period of close association between me as High Commissioner and Haksar as the Prime Minister's Secretary. It did not take me long to find that the euphoria in Bangladesh over India's massive assistance to its people during the liberation war was fading quickly and suspicion of India's intention was being deliberately sown by fundamentalist groups and political leaders who had personal enmity with the wartime leader Tajuddin Ahmed. Prime Minister Mujib who had no personal knowledge of Indian assistance must have lent his ears to mischief-makers like Khondakar Mostaque Ahmed. Mujib made no secret of his feeling that India was seeking to settle its problems with Pakistan without sufficient regard to Bangladesh's interest and priorities.

The Simla Agreement of June 1972 between Prime Ministers Bhutto and Gandhi was not at all welcomed in Dacca. Public opinion in Bangladesh was extremely sore over Pakistan's hostile propaganda. Not only did Pakistan not recognise Bangladesh, but under its influence the Muslim countries of West Asia withheld their recognition. So did China.

It was just as well that by then D.P. Dhar had been relieved of the responsibility of dealing with Bangladesh and his place was taken by Haksar. Dhar's flamboyant ways ill accorded with the changed atmosphere in Dacca. Haksar visited Dacca soon after the conclusion of the Simla Agreement. This was to be the first of many such visits during the following 18 months. As High Commissioner I

used to accompany him whenever he called on Prime Minister Mujib. He was objective, frank and persuasive and made no attempt to slur over any sensitive issue. He might not have convinced the other side on all points but they recognised his sincerity. And his sense of humour would often relieve the tension that occasionally developed during discussion.

The two issues which were of intimate concern to Bangladesh were the future of the Pakistani prisoners of war and the Bihari refugees numbering several lakhs; most had collaborated with the Pakistan army during the liberation war. These issues were discussed by the Indian and Pakistani representatives at many sittings held alternately in New Delhi and Islamabad. Haksar represented India at all these discussions; he did so even after he had ceased to have any official connection with the government in Delhi.

His was by no means an easy task. Since Pakistan had not recognised Bangladesh, the latter did not participate in the talks and the Indian representative had to put the views of Bangladesh to the other side. He had, therefore, to keep in touch with the government in Dacca while discussions were in progress in New Delhi or Islamabad. Fortunately, during that crucial period the Foreign minister of Bangladesh was Kamal Hosain, a highly educated and brilliant advocate who enjoyed Mujib's full confidence. He made himself available to me at all hours of the day whenever an urgent message arrived from Haksar at the other end to ascertain Bangladesh's views on any point. Although Bangladesh was an absent party at these discussions, its views were well represented.

My long association with government ended in June 1974 when I retired from the High Commissioner's post in Dacca to a quiet life in Calcutta. I lost touch with my old friends and colleagues most of whom were in Delhi. But, curiously enough, within a couple of years I was drawn into a sphere of activity which again brought me close to Haksar.

In November 1973 Haksar was elected Chairman of the

Council of the Indian Statistical Institute and I was elected President of the Institute in September 1976, and both of us continue in our respective positions. Under the regulations the President is elected every two years by the members of the Institute. Similarly, the Chairman is elected by the members of the Council.

The Indian Statistical Institute is recognised all over the world as a centre of higher research and teaching in statistics and mathematics and some related disciplines. In 1959 Prime Minister Nehru piloted a bill in Parliament according recognition to the Institute as an institution of national importance with the power to accord degrees and diplomas. Prof. P.C. Mahalanobis, who was the founder of the Institute in 1932, was its Secretary until his passing away in 1972. During his lifetime he held all the reins of authority in his hands, in academic as well as administrative matters. By that time the Institute had grown into a big organisation with its headquarters in Calcutta and important centres in Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Madras. The staff of the Institute, particularly the non-academic, had grown considerably.

After Mahalanobis's death there was a sudden vacuum in the leadership and great apprehension in the minds of the academic and non-academic staff about the future of the Institute. It was at this juncture that Haksar was elected Chairman of the Council. The President's functions are more or less formal. He presides only over the annual general meeting of the members and over the annual convocation. It is the Council which is in practice the governing body of the Institute and it is the Chairman who functions on behalf of the Council from day to day.

Haksar's assumption of office coincided with some basic changes in the regulations. Further, in 1982 the Central government appointed a high-powered committee to review the work of the Institute. This committee submitted its report in 1983 suggesting several important changes in the organisation and functioning of the Institute.

Traditionally, the academic and non-academic staff of the

Institute have been highly unionised and, whatever the government's views, unless the proposed changes carry the consent of the non-academic staff, they can bring the work of the Institute to a standstill. On the other hand, as the finances of the Institute are provided by the Central government, the financial decision rests with it. This onerous responsibility of reconciling different points of view fell upon Haksar. He was the ideal person for work of this kind. His earnest and sympathetic attitude towards the claims and aspirations of the staff was largely recognised by all members. He had also a very high standing with the Central government because of the responsible positions he had held earlier. Ultimately, he could persuade government to accept some modifications of the review committee's recommendations. It is noteworthy that during the past 15 years, although there have been agitations and demonstrations by an active workers' organisation, at no time has there been any disruption of the work of the Institute.

I am convinced that Haksar's work as Chairman of the Council of the Indian Statistical Institute has been a signal contribution to the cause of advanced research and education in India.

T.N. KAUL

Recollections: an association of six decades

It is not easy to write about P.N. Haksar. He is a multifaceted and interesting personality. It is difficult to do justice to his qualities of head and heart in a brief article. I shall, therefore, confine myself to relating a few recollections of our friendship and co-operation extending some 56 years, which may perhaps give a peep into his real personality and character.

I first came across Babbu Haksar in 1932 when we were both studying at Allahabad University. He was a very bright and hard-working student and never got into any scrapes. Students looked up to him as a friend, philosopher and guide. He was quiet by nature, serious minded and did not throw his weight about.

I met Haksar again when he was inducted into the Indian Foreign Service by Jawaharlal Nehru. He was sent as Counsellor to London to hold Krishna Menon's hand and help him through difficult times. Krishna Menon was not an easy man to work with but Haksar had the tact and skill to be able to advise Krishna Menon from time to time successfully. He was perhaps one of the few members of the Foreign

Service who got along with Krishna Menon and whom Krishna Menon respected. Haksar worked in the High Commission of India, London, as Counsellor, Deputy and Acting High Commissioner and is still remembered by those who worked with him. He also had excellent contacts with eminent Britons in Parliament, journalism and among writers, actors and others. They still speak of him with respect and affection.

Later, Haksar as Joint Secretary (Administration) in the ministry of External Affairs, was able to cut red tape and deliver the goods to all members of the service fairly and equitably. He never said 'no' but he did not say 'yes' unless he was convinced that he could fulfil the demands made on him.

My most pleasant memories of co-operation and friendship with Haksar relate to the period when he worked as Secretary to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and later as her Principal Secretary. I happened to be Foreign Secretary at that time. I do not remember a single occasion on which we had any serious differences; on the contrary, I remember many occasions when we worked hand in hand and successfully. It was a happy relationship between two colleagues who saw eye to eye on most matters and did not keep any secrets from each other. It was this kind of co-operation that enabled us to knit together a brilliant team consisting of the Chiefs of Staff, the Defence Secretary, the Cabinet Secretary, the Foreign Secretary, D.P. Dhar and P.N. Haksar during the difficult and trying days of the Bangladesh crisis. We used to meet in my room once and sometimes even twice a day to take stock of the developments and chalk out the course of action. I have yet to see such close co-operation and co-ordination between various wings of the Government of India during a crisis. With the clear instructions given by Indira Gandhi, it was not difficult to carry out our plans smoothly and successfully.

Haksar was a good friend but placed national interest

above friendship. When I had taken leave preparatory to retirement I was recalled and asked if I would go as Ambassador to Washington. Mrs. Gandhi asked Haksar to sound me first. I told him frankly that I did not want a job unless Mrs. Gandhi was convinced that I would be useful to the country in that post. I was not keen to go there; so Haksar reported to Mrs. Gandhi to tackle me herself. I saw Mrs. Gandhi the next day and expressed my doubts and hesitation to her. But when she said that she wanted someone who could stand up to the U.S. Administration, and had a wide perception of India's policies and interests, I accepted the offer. Haksar's advice to me on that occasion was instrumental in my accepting the offer. Whether it was justified or not I do not know but I leave it to future historians to judge. All I wish to say is that Haksar did not hesitate to be frank, honest and even outspoken with me at any time.

Another occasion when I had to play a similar role was when Mrs. Gandhi wanted to send D.P. Dhar as Ambassador to the Soviet Union for the second time. Haksar was not able to convince him and Mrs. Gandhi asked me to try. It was not easy. D.P. Dhar was not keen to go to Moscow and told me frankly that his health would suffer and he might even die in the Moscow winter. I convinced him that if he controlled his smoking, drinking and eating habits, Moscow might do him some good. It was after some difficulty that I was able to persuade him to accept the offer. He did an excellent job of work during his second term in Moscow but his health suffered and he died with his boots on. Sometimes I feel a little guilty in having persuaded D.P. to accept the offer but on the whole I think it was justified. I expressed these feelings to Haksar and he agreed with me.

There were many occasions when some people tried to sow seeds of difference between Haksar and me particularly when I was Foreign Secretary, and he was Secretary to the Prime Minister. I must, however, say that our mutual friendship and understanding was so deep-rooted that they did not

succeed. I remember an occasion when Henry Kissinger came to India in July 1971 before his surreptitious trip to Peking. He saw Haksar first and had a long conversation with me immediately thereafter. Haksar had already telephoned me the essence of his conversation with Kissinger. Kissinger tried to get an assessment from me which would be different from that of Haksar but did not succeed. I have recorded a verbatim summary of my discussion with Kissinger in my book *The Kissinger Years*.

Haksar really came into his own when he was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission with cabinet rank. This gave him an opportunity to visit almost all the states of India and see the implementation of the Five-Year Plans on the ground. His views and suggestions were valuable and more often than not he succeeded in persuading the political leadership at the Centre and in the states. Haksar's grasp of the social, economic, political and cultural problems of India is very wide and deep. He speaks with knowledge on all these subjects in a manner that is convincing and comprehensible. His vision is very perceptive. He speaks in the larger framework of India's history, tradition, and potentiality. His contribution as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission is indeed very great.

After his retirement from the Planning Commission, he devoted himself almost exclusively to guiding the younger generation — scientists, economists, and others in their various activities. As elected Chairman of the Indian Statistical Institute, he has instilled life into the mere statistical picture of India.

Haksar is very much in demand at different seminars and public meetings. In spite of his weakening eyesight, he has never hesitated to make his valuable contribution to all these activities.

Haksar and I happen to be associated, even after our retirement, in several organisations. He is the President of the Centre for Rural and Industrial Development, which we

set up together in Chandigarh. I am its Vice-President. This institution is training a number of young researchers and scholars in problems that concern India vitally. It has published several books, held seminars and is regarded as a very valuable organisation by the Centre, the states as well as intellectuals. We are also associated in the STAND (Society for Science, Technology and National Development). I am the President and he is the working Chairman of this organisation. We have held seminars and addressed young scientists and technologists under the auspices of this organisation. We have also published some papers and books which have been highly appreciated both in India and abroad. Haksar and I are also associated in the Centre for Studies on Indo-China and the Centre for Study of Regional Affairs. In all these and other bodies, Haksar has taken a leading part in spite of the many demands on his time.

Haksar is a man of strong will and deep convictions and yet he has an open and responsive mind and is willing to hear the point of view of others. He is never dogmatic but is always persuasive. He has a charming way of winning friends. I am glad to be one of them. I wish Babbu Haksar many more years of health and happiness, so that he will be able to continue to give his valuable advice and guidance to the younger generation.

G. PARTHASARATHI

Integrated View of Statecraft

Eminent diplomat, planner, administrator and humanist, P.N. Haksar has played a major role in the shaping of policy as well as its implementation in crucial areas of our national life. He is much more than a distinguished civil servant. He enjoys high respect in our public life because of his wide experience, wisdom and integrity. As an old friend and colleague who has great affection for him, I welcome this opportunity to greet him on his 75th birthday and pay tribute to his dedicated service to further the cause of building a modern, democratic and secular state and a just society in our country which in turn would strengthen our role in promoting international peace and co-operation.

We met for the first time in London in April 1949, and felt that we had known each other all our lives. Haksar was an important officer in the High Commission. I had just taken over as Chief Representative of the Press Trust of India in London. I had necessarily to keep in close touch with the High Commission and met Haksar ever so often. I found that we had a similar outlook on many issues of national and international importance. We established a rapport with each other which has been strengthened over the years.

There was another link that brought us closer. During our student days in the 1930s in England we had come under the magnetic influence of Krishna Menon and worked for him in the India League and imbibed some of his passion for Independence and his radical outlook. I had known Krishna Menon since 1932. As High Commissioner in 1949 he was very kind to me and I had easy access to him. In those formative years when our foreign policy was being shaped, Krishna Menon was very much in the picture and was consulted by Jawaharlal Nehru. It was an education for me to watch and report on the evolution of our policy of peace, peaceful co-existence, and non-alignment. It must have been more so in the case of Haksar who was closer to the decision-making process.

It is always a pleasure to talk to Haksar as it is to read his speeches and articles. He has a sense of history and has thought deeply of the evolution of India in the context of the changes that are taking place in the world. He takes an integrated view of nation-building and development, on a democratic and socialistic basis, and foreign relations which are all parts of national policy. He has the capacity for acute analysis of problems which is all the more convincing because it is presented in a detached manner.

For many of us, the basic approach to the problems of India and the world, and the values that should be cherished, are those articulated by Jawaharlal Nehru, and leavened by the teachings of Gandhiji. After quoting from Nehru that “a living philosophy should answer the problems of today”, Haksar says that Nehru’s “conceptual framework and what he actually achieved continue to be of great relevance today”. He goes on to add, “As far as I, with my limited understanding, can peer into the future not merely of India but of mankind as a whole, I see that future depending desperately on the triumph of co-operation over conflict. Nehru deeply believed in this. Mankind’s future depends equally on freeing individual nations from the mythology of their own history so that they become part of the universal

history of mankind. If this be true, then Nehru is of relevance. If the politics of tomorrow is to be freed from the corrosiveness of purely personal ambition and raised to the level of serving great causes — such as liberating men from poverty, disease and hunger, both of body and of mind — then Nehru is of relevance. If kindness, magnanimity, gentleness, concern for others, are the virtues which should inform public life, then Nehru is of relevance. And, finally, if the object of man's existence on earth is not pursuit of private profit and personal advancement at the expense of the community, then Nehru's vision of socialism combined with democracy at the grass-root level is of relevance." I have taken this passage from Haksar's Nehru Memorial Lecture in London in 1974 because of its current significance.

I shall not venture to chronicle the many achievements that stand to Haksar's credit. They are far too many as he was involved in dealing with important issues on a day-to-day basis. The peak period of his pervasive influence and major contributions was when he was Secretary to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and later Principal Secretary during the period 1967 to 1973. The country was facing many challenges, both domestic and international. I shall mention only a few.

The Bangladesh crisis and Pakistan's war against us in 1971 raised intricate issues of policy and imposed a severe strain on us. The inflow of over 9 million refugees from East Pakistan cast an intolerable burden on our resources. Feelings were running high in the country because of the atrocities committed by the Pakistan Army in the eastern region. And there was the ever-present danger of war with Pakistan for which the country had to be prepared.

India's policy was one of sympathy and support to the cause of the people of Bangladesh, of rousing the conscience of the world against the repression there, and of approaching the nations of the world to intercede with Pakistan to seek a political solution to the problem so that the refugees could return home in safety and honour.

Indira Gandhi set out the basic issues in a speech in Moscow in September 1971. She said, "What has happened in Bangladesh can no longer be regarded as Pakistan's domestic affair. More than 9 million East Bengalis have come into our country. Do they not have the right to live and work in their country? We cannot be expected to absorb them." She added, "This is not an India-Pakistan dispute. The problem is an international one. But the weight of it has fallen on India. It is surely the duty of the world not to delay in creating conditions in which these refugees, irrespective of their religion, can return without fear." She also pointed out that the situation posed a real threat to peace and stability in Asia.

High-powered delegations were sent to many countries to convey our concerns and explain our policy. Indira Gandhi herself undertook a tour of major Western capitals, including Washington, in October 1971 to seek the good offices of Pakistan's friends to persuade Yahya Khan to negotiate with Sheikh Mujib and arrive at a political settlement.

But these efforts did not bring about the desired results. Because of President Nixon's "tilt" towards Pakistan, the United States Government was hostile to India, blamed us for the Bangladesh crisis and put pressure on us. In the expectation of support from the United States and China, Pakistan launched war on December 3, 1971. We were prepared to meet this eventuality. Our armed forces, with the support of the Mukti Bahini, defeated the Pakistan Army in Bangladesh which was forced to surrender on December 16. India took the initiative the next day to end the war by offering a unilateral cease-fire on the western front which was accepted by Pakistan on the same day.

Throughout the two-week war, the United States increased pressure on us by cutting off economic aid and finally ordering a naval task force led by the aircraft carrier *Enterprise* to move into the Bay of Bengal.

The Soviet Union stood by us solidly during this period. It

made efforts to intercede with Pakistan to work out a political solution. Consultations held during the crisis in terms of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of August 1971, and the warning issued by the Soviet Union on the declaration of war by Pakistan in December 1971 that it could not remain indifferent to the developments, had a sobering effect on both the USA and China. At the emergency session of the U.N. Security Council, the Soviet Union fully supported India and prevented adverse decisions being taken against us. All this proved that the Indo-Soviet Treaty, which is essentially a treaty of peace, friendship and co-operation, is of immense importance in moments of crisis when our security is threatened.

During the Bangladesh crisis Indira Gandhi was very much in command. Her judgment and timing in dealing with the evolving situation was faultless. True to her style of functioning, she sought advice from a wide range of sources, including her political colleagues, and then came to her own decision. Patience and determination in the pursuit of our principled policy in the face of pressures from powerful countries was the distinguishing feature of that period.

Internally, senior civil, military and intelligence officers met on a day-to-day basis in the External Affairs ministry to monitor developments and take necessary action. This was a process which needed co-ordination at the policy level and Haksar's role was very important as he was close to the Prime Minister and was her key adviser during this difficult period.

India recognised the Bangladesh government on December 6, 1971. The refugees returned in a few weeks and the Indian Army was withdrawn from Bangladesh on March 12, 1972. But then many problems had to be dealt with in the aftermath of the war. We had 93,000 prisoners of war in our custody. Five thousand square miles of Pakistani territory was also under our control. A conference was convened in Simla on June 28, 1972, between Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and President Bhutto of Pakistan. The negotiations at this conference were difficult and there were moments of

crisis and deadlock. As one who was in Simla at that time, I can say that Haksar played an important role in resolving the difficulties and working out a satisfactory agreement. He was also actively involved in the equally difficult negotiations which had to be followed through on the repatriation of POWs and of Bangladeshi and Pakistani nationals from each other's territory.

The Simla Agreement was widely welcomed in India in the hope that it would usher in a new chapter in Indo-Pakistan relations. There were, however, some in India who felt that we should have taken a tougher stand with Pakistan. But we were looking to the future of our relationship with Pakistan. Writing in 1979, Haksar set out the main elements of our approach to the negotiations with Pakistan, the most important of which was, as he put it, "the moment of defeat must never be converted into a moment of humiliation". He further remarked, "History would record, and the saner elements in Pakistan would admit, that India made the largest investment in the years following the Bangladesh crisis in promoting trust and confidence."

It is a matter of regret that our friendly and positive approach, both at Simla and since, has not been reciprocated and that, as a result, relations with Pakistan are at a very low ebb today. Pakistan's support to the terrorists in Punjab is a flagrant instance of the phobia of India being deliberately sustained for internal purposes.

As I was writing these lines came the news of the tragic death of President Zia-ul-Haq. Let us hope that out of this trauma will emerge in Pakistan a government which will reflect the true interests and wishes of its people and will co-operate in promoting friendship and good neighbourly relations. That is our ardent wish.

Let me turn now to another important aspect of India's development in the post-Nehru period in which Haksar played a notable part. Jawaharlal Nehru always emphasised the importance, indeed the indispensability, of science and technology for solving the country's problems of

backwardness and poverty and for building self-reliance. His many contributions in terms of policy-making and institution-building to harness science and technology for national development are well known. During her tenure as Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi made major and lasting contributions to deepen and widen our self-reliant capacity in science and technology and, indeed, to make this country a major scientific and technological power. Haksar played a central role in those achievements, particularly in the setting up of the Electronics and Space Commissions, the building up of the Defence R&D organisation and the ONGC and in interlinking both policies and programmes in key areas of science and technology for national development and security. The fact that scientific organisations should be led and managed by scientist-managers, which is more an accepted practice in our government today, owes a great deal to the many measures Haksar initiated towards that end in the early 1970s. Haksar also sought to extend this professionalisation of the management of scientific agencies to the management of economic ministries of government and of our public sector companies.

Haksar's many friends and admirers have been distressed by the state of his health and the disabilities from which he suffers. He has borne them with great fortitude. His high sense of public duty makes him respond to the many demands made on him, in spite of the strain to which he is subjected. Haksar is always willing to espouse any worthy cause. Warm-hearted, he tries to help anyone who seeks assistance or advice.

In these troubled times, his sane and wise counsel is most needed. I wish him good health and many more years of public service.

H.Y. SHARADA PRASAD

Vision and Warm Heart

P.N. Haksar has been called the most outstanding civil servant that free India has produced. Yet he is atypical of our administrative services in which technicians preponderate over thinkers. Indeed Haksar is not a favourite with our administrative class. For one thing, he is not a “regular recruit” and so an outsider. Again, he does not share their neutrality in regard to the purposes of the State. He is a Nehruite whereas most officials are Patelites. This is what explains the outcry that broke out when Haksar spoke of commitment on the part of officialdom. It was interpreted as an apologia for a bureaucracy suborned and subservient to the party. At any rate, the upper echelons of the services have never been at ease with his London School of Economics type of social activism and have regarded him as a patron saint of Leftism.

In my view Haksar belongs not to the so-called meritocracy but to an older and longer tradition of counsellors to kings in our country. For all his grounding in Marxian dialectics, his prodigious knowledge of European history and modern jurisprudence, and his pipe-smoking, his outlook is moulded more by the older Sanskrit and Persian

modes of thought and reflection. You could imagine this Queen's Councillor (which he became) holding converse with Vishnu Sharma (of the *Panchatantra*) and with Abdur Rahim Khankhana.

Haksar has two or three pre-eminent concerns. First, the education of the political master (which, whether a polity is a monarchy, an oligarchy or a democracy) is the determining political factor. Secondly, the consideration of the larger social good. It is not for nothing that in Haksar's conversation you repeatedly hear the word *dharma* mentioned. *Dharma* to him would be a body of principle and practice which has provenly benefited a people. At the same time he would want policy to take note of the realities of history — the egalitarian urges, the progressive secularisation of life, and the inescapable thrust of technology. He cannot envisage a static state. To him there is no escape from the enlargement of the power base and the effective enfranchisement of the people.

Haksar is at his best in dialogue. His conversational style is marked not merely by intellectual range and depth but by verbal brilliance, polemical precision and wit. It incorporates some of the elements of classical Indian or Greek dialogues. Sometimes there are turns of phrase which could have come out of Walter Savage Landor. His interventions in committees and conferences are effective, but less so than in *tête-à-tête*. For he takes a long time to outline his premise—he feels it necessary to make a group realise that he approaches the subject from a wholly different standpoint from theirs. He tends to become didactic, dealing with first principles. This habit of his made an impatient academic remark, after a Haksar discourse on foreign policy, “Lord! Is this the man whom we thought to be our Talleyrand?” But it is this concern with first principles that enabled him to say to Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, when he found a head of the Gandhara Buddha in his study: “Mr. President, when you look at this Buddha, do you, in all honesty, think of a 1,000-year war with India?”

Mention of Bhutto is a proper occasion for discussing Haksar's role in the Simla talks, indeed in the entire management of events leading to the emergence of Bangladesh. He was one of the principal shapers of Indira Gandhi's Bangladesh policy. He gauged the public mood in East Pakistan, understood the importance of linguistic loyalty as an antidote to religious fanaticism, supervised the collation of intelligence and co-ordination with the Defence machine, counselled his principal against yielding to the taunts of opponents and the pleadings of colleagues for premature intervention, assisted in the treaty with the Soviet Union, and, above all, prepared the blueprint for Indira Gandhi's tour of Western capitals in October-November 1971. Foreign policy commentators at that time did not fully appreciate the purpose and significance of this tour but historians will, at some time, recognise it as one of India's major diplomatic achievements. The tour ensured that if and when there was fighting the European end of the Atlantic Alliance would not go along with the American.

A prompt unilateral cease-fire after the rout of the Pakistani forces in Bangladesh was always an intrinsic part of India's strategy. Only those who have total faith in Nixon and Kissinger as truth-tellers would give credence to Kissinger's assertion that it was any American threat of reprisal that prevented an Indian advance into the western part of Pakistan after the surrender in Dacca. India's intentions towards Pakistan had just a few days earlier been made clear to the U.S. President in the celebrated letter that Indira Gandhi wrote to him, of which the draft was by Haksar. That is the reason for giving rather extensive excerpts from it:

Dear Mr. President, I am writing at a moment of deep anguish at the unhappy turn which the relations between our two countries have taken.

I am setting aside all pride, prejudice and passion and trying, as calmly as I can, to analyse once again the origins

of the tragedy which is being enacted.

All unprejudiced persons objectively surveying the grim events in Bangladesh since March 25 have recognised the revolt of 75 million people, a people who were forced to the conclusion that neither their life, nor their liberty, to say nothing of the possibility of the pursuit of happiness, was available to them. The world press, radio and television have faithfully recorded the story. The most perceptive of American scholars who are knowledgeable about the affairs of this subcontinent revealed the anatomy of East Bengal's frustrations....

War could have been avoided if the power, influence and authority of all the States, and above all the United States, had got Sheikh Mujibur Rahman released. Instead, we were told that a civilian administration was being installed. Everyone knows that this civilian administration was a farce; today the farce has turned into a tragedy.

Mr. President, may I ask you in all sincerity: Was the release or even secret negotiations with a single human being, namely Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, more disastrous than the waging of a war?...

We are asked what we want. We seek nothing for ourselves. We do not want any territory of what was East Pakistan and now constitutes Bangladesh. We do not want any territory of West Pakistan. We do want lasting peace with Pakistan.....

During my visit to the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Austria and Belgium, the point I emphasised, publicly as well as privately, was the immediate need for a political settlement. We waited nine months for it. When Dr. Kissinger came on July 7, 1971, I had emphasised to him the importance of seeking an early political settlement. But we have not received, even to this day, the barest framework of a settlement which would take into account the facts as they are and not as we imagine them to be.

Be that as it may, it is my earnest and sincere hope that

with all your knowledge and deep understanding of human affairs, you as President of the United States and reflecting the will, the aspirations and idealism of the great American people, will at least let me know where precisely we have gone wrong before your representatives or spokesmen deal with us with such harshness of language.

In Simla a few months later, with D.P. Dhar taking ill, the task of making assessments and advising the Prime Minister fell largely on Haksar.

I vividly remember a particular meeting of the Political Affairs Committee at which Indira Gandhi met with uncomfortable, non-committal silence from her colleagues when she mentioned her proposal about releasing prisoners-of-war and returning territory. She then asked Haksar to set forth the reasons for the proposal. This he did, taking almost three-quarters of an hour. It was a masterly exposition, notable for its incisiveness and grasp of political realities and historical and psychological insights. When he had done, Indira Gandhi posed the question again and, one by one, Jagjivan Ram, Y.B. Chavan, Swaran Singh and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed indicated their assent.

The final day of the negotiations was an agonising yo-yo. Indeed at one stage in the evening, the Foreign Office specialists announced to the press that the negotiations had broken down. They should have recognised brinkmanship for what it was and also known that it was unthinkable for Bhutto to go back empty-handed. Pressed by inquisitive correspondents, I told them of a late evening meeting that had been fixed between Bhutto and Indira Gandhi, which would be followed by the formal banquet, and added that as professionals they should know that the game did not end until the players had dispersed. It is recorded knowledge now that Bhutto and Indira Gandhi withdrew from the dining table for serious talks and an agreement was signed late at night (witnessed by a much diminished press crowd — it was a task even to get a still cameraman to record the ceremony).

A couple of hours later, while driving back from Simla to the cottage called Dane's Folly, I remarked to Haksar and P.N. Dhar that it was, all in all, a day India could be satisfied with.

I recall what Haksar said in reply: "Ah, not until there is an agreement also with China".

This consciousness of the challenges ahead, this habit of taking a longer look at things, at future history, is characteristic of Haksar.

The civil servant, it is said, is at best a master of the short-term solution. Not Haksar. Indira Gandhi more than once remarked that the Prime Minister's Secretary was politically as important as a Cabinet minister and usually knew more about what was happening in government. Many of his troubles with officialdom were because of his distrust of the short-term solution and of administrative smart-aleckry. But even those who resented his authority respected his guts and his brilliance. And for the likes of me, who had access to his never-failing sympathy, his intellectual zest, his bubbling sense of fun, his vast store of aphorisms and analogies, working with Haksar was an education in urbanity. We need his kind of civilising influence for years more.

NIKHIL CHAKRAVARTTY

Interplay of Politics and Morals

A half century of acquaintance defies prosaic narration nor would it honestly permit any jejune generalisation. Human life is complex and the times through which we are passing have witnessed tempests and turbulence, moments of glory and patches of gloom.

I first met P.N. Haksar in 1938 — an exceedingly handsome young man who impressed me by his demeanour and sensitivity enriched by the stamp of culture. He was quiet by nature but with a sense of humour in abundance. Above all, he struck me as a person with an acute spirit of enquiry, which ranged from Malinowski to Marx, trying to grasp the historical forces behind social and political happenings around us all. In a basement in a quiet part of London, with a patch of green in front, his digs betrayed the flavour of a serious intellectual's life — simple but not ascetic, widely read but not scholastic. There was quiet warmth in friendship — no boisterous snobbery but easy informality. There was nothing loud about him. He had the urge to go deep into any subject, but his profundity would never show off. All these have endured in the 50 years that have followed.

Even in those days, one impression about Haksar I have always cherished, he would argue with conviction but would try to understand other points of view. His opinions are firm, but his mind is never closed. A constant striving for objectivity, yet a partisan for whatever cause that he regarded to be right.

He has always been a proud Indian, ever awake to defend national self-respect. We were naturally all emotional in wanting to see our motherland freed from foreign rule. He was one of those who could reinforce this with reason. I remember an incident when, at a gathering of Indian students about to attend an international conference in Paris, we found amongst us a fanatically pro-Nazi Indian who fervently argued for Hitlerism and denounced anti-fascism. It was not unusual to find in those days a Goebbels plant masquerading as a radical. Some of us got excited and denounced him, others were annoyed but were not het up. Haksar argued with cool reason, without passion, and demolished his arguments one by one with utmost courtesy. Next day the gentleman did not turn up. Perhaps he went back disappointed; had he been thrown out in high passion, he could have hit the headlines.

Nehru was certainly the hero of our generation. It was amazing how he commanded the total allegiance of all sections of the youth — from the socialistically inclined to the home-spun Gandhite amongst us. He was a general in struggle who was also an intellectual with vision. But Krishna Menon was our squad leader in the campaign for Indian independence in Britain. We all knew his rough-hewn temper, his strong likes and dislikes, but we also knew his sturdy qualities of unbending patriotism. Even when we differed, we could never ignore the strength of his impact. Haksar was one of those very close to Krishna.

During the years of war, I met Haksar once in Calcutta, where he came to attend a conference: it was a brief encounter.

By the time independence came, our occupations took us

to different arenas of activity. I became a reporter watching momentous happenings, sometimes from the ringside, sometimes from far away. He chose to serve the country by joining free India's Foreign Service, and had the advantage of meeting and knowing many luminaries at close quarters. He could see the way power politics operated at the United Nations or in battle-scarred Korea. Above all, he had the unique opportunity of serving under Nehru, comprehending the world vision that he strove to spread.

Sometime in the mid-1950s, I turned up at the annexe of Hyderabad House, where the office of External Publicity was located. There was Haksar in charge of the division that was publicising our foreign policy stand and also clarifying and explaining it to the media, which had not only the Doubting Thomases but fierce detractors as well.

The links were reforged and, in the old Wellesley Road flat where he lived, one sensed anew the life that was unostentatious but rich in its matrix, and civilised in its sobriety. There was a perceptible and responsive sense of mutuality — not a forced one but consciously cultivated. One could watch an introspective individual in a trusting and trusted home.

As years advanced, new worlds opened up for him — diplomat in the newly freed Nigeria, and then in Austria past her prima donna days, and then back in Britain in the discomfort of seeing the country he was accredited to kowtow to the U.S. overlordship.

When he returned home in 1967, Haksar found himself face to face with happenings which changed the very face of Indian politics. It was in this phase one saw the mettle of the person, not only when he was entrusted with the responsibility of running a general staff in mighty battles both at home and abroad, but equally importantly, later on, when he could watch developments unfold but he was in no position to intervene. These were the years of his greatness — as much in office as outside the red-stone ramparts of power.

One noticed throughout a severely disciplined mind, with

meticulous adherence to details but never losing sight of the wider implications at stake — in short, his stamp of statesmanship could lift mundane politics to new heights. Not that he did not make mistakes. He has been never so stupid as to claim infallibility nor vulgar to brag about his achievements. Fostered on the groundwork of education in the classics of our rich civilisation, he has acquired an understanding of the interplay of forces in the contemporary world, both social and political. On such foundations, he has sought to carry on the sophisticated vision of a new order both for our country and the world. What marked him out was his constant effort at understanding the realities, the forces at work. At the same time, Haksar in his outlook on life and practice has always combated crass determinism, and has never failed to emphasise the role of consciousness in bringing about changes.

Hence, for all his premonitions, Haksar has an abiding faith in the moral triumph of humankind along with its material advance. With a sustaining quality that must keep him going for many many years to come, he towers as an active citizen persevering to make a better world out of this great republic of ours.

S. GOPAL

Haksar and the Nation-building Process

Civil servants, by the very nature of their jobs, engage little public attention. They are expected at best to carry out their tasks with integrity and efficiency; and these are cold and passive virtues which pass without comment. P.N. Haksar is the most distinguished public servant of his generation in India. But saying that is not, as it normally would be, the end of the story. He is well known throughout the country and a large number of people from all walks of life look on him with deep admiration and affection as a mentor. Even today, some years after his retirement, a call on him at his residence in Shanti Niketan in Delhi is, to very many who have little in common with each other, an intellectual stimulant they cannot do without.

What makes Haksar so special and unusual a person? There is, of course, the warmth of his personality. No-one, however petty, tiresome and querulous, can evade the spread of his generosity. I have myself been surprised by encounters with various types in whose favour nothing can be said except that they have secured Haksar's backing. To this

encompassing goodwill are added a trained intellect, a well-stocked mind which is being continuously nourished and a healthy radicalism. Together they have enabled him to function with distinction in various capacities.

In the High Commission in London Haksar could deal effectively with the British because he grasped the premises of their thought and action; as the High Commissioner in Nigeria he was in accord with the spirit of the new Africa; and as Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister he brought to the highest levels of policy-making a purpose and an *élan* which combined integrity and idealism with success in a way rarely seen. Mrs. Gandhi should never have let him retire; and, once the thrill of Haksar's touch was gone, her regime shifted to a downward curve.

What made Haksar so unusual a civil servant? A bureaucracy in a democratic society is by definition free of ideology and serves without demur any party that comes to power. But when a country moves from bondage to freedom the parameters change and the ordinary premises no longer hold. So when Nehru became Prime Minister in 1947 he, while utilising as best he could an already entrenched civil service, also called to the task of building a free India men and women who had, in the years of the freedom movement, shown that they had thinking and articulate minds which had considered the ways in which the country should develop after independence and the directions in which it should move. Haksar, a young lawyer with a flourishing practice in Allahabad, was one of those who caught Nehru's eye and he was promptly recruited to the Foreign Service. An active mind in the airless corridors of diplomacy seems an anomaly; but Haksar brought his wide study and clear principles to bear with great advantage on the issues that concerned a harassed India. Kashmir, British machinations on diverse fronts, Korea were matters where the country gained from Haksar's deft handling. Then he toned up the organisation of external publicity in Delhi and stabilised the administration of the ministry as a whole before going

on to head missions in Africa and Europe. The high watermark of his varied services to India was during his years in Delhi at Mrs. Gandhi's right hand, administering the country with an adherence to principle and a concern for values. The secret of Haksar's achievement has been that his efficiency has not been soulless but animated throughout by an awareness of the true ends of government and a determination to keep the machinery of state moving towards those ends.

Haksar 75! It is difficult to believe, for no-one I know has maintained so well a youthfulness of spirit and keeps bubbling over with contagious laughter, born of a real sense of the comic and the absurd. But beneath the flooding vividness, the sympathetic understanding and the unshakeable loyalty to his friends, especially when they are under attack, is an intensity of thought and motive which gives drive to his effort and strength to those who look to him, even in his retirement, for guidance. He is one of the few outstanding figures of present-day India. Without holding public office and spending over 30 years in the civil service, he has both influenced policy for the better and helped very many of his fellow citizens to think and act on the right lines. Of a rare few, with a career like his, can this be said anywhere and at any time.

PUSHPA M. BHARGAVA

Letter from a Scientist

You, Mr. Haksar

As a professional scientist who published his first paper 41 years ago, I have always wondered as to who should be called a scientist. I have painstakingly learnt that a degree in science (including a Ph.D.) hardly makes one a scientist. In many cases, in our country especially, a science degree does not make one any more competent than just capable of performing certain operations according to prescribed procedures. What people do not often realise is that science is not just information or technique — not merely an arithmetic sum of physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy and mathematics, or a means to increase industrial or agricultural production. Science is a way of life which allows one to pursue truth without bias or prejudgment. Practice of science generates a value system which is rational, reasonable, appeals to common sense and, above all, has a built-in corrective. Therefore, a true scientist is not one who has a degree or formal training in an area of science, but one who understands what the method is that science uses to acquire knowledge, what the attributes of this knowledge are, and what the nature and structure of the value system is that the practice of science generates. It is, indeed, not without reason, therefore, that most of the world's most

prestigious scientific academies allow election to their fellowship or membership of those who might not have had any high scientific degree but who have excelled in regard to satisfying the above-mentioned criteria of a real scientist. One such person that our country has produced was Jawaharlal Nehru. Another is P.N. Haksar.

It is this extraordinary quality, among many others, that you have that has attracted so many of us. It is for this reason that when we — Bakul Patel and I — were looking for someone to chair a meeting in Conoor in 1980 that resulted in the well-known statement on Scientific Temper, we thought of you. And, again, when a couple of years later, the Nehru Centre organised a debate between those who subscribed to this statement and Sri Ranganathananda of Ramakrishna Mission and his followers, in Bombay, we thought of you as the moderator, for who else in this country could take on anyone — be it a Vedic scholar or a professional scientist, an economist or a historian — but you.

Similarly, when a few years ago we thought of a small get-together with Francis Crick, the founder-architect of modern biology, at Nagarjunasagar, we all unanimously thought of you in the same breath as Satish Dhawan or M.G.K. Menon.

I know of no thinker — past or present — whose breadth of knowledge and vision has been so wide and far-reaching, and whose ability to perceive, to comprehend, to collate, to analyse and to express, so acute, incisive and precise.

Unknowingly, but quite wittingly, you have set up standards in the country which many of us have attempted to emulate. And, thank God (*if* He exists) for that, for there have not been many on our contemporary scene whom one would like to emulate.

Modesty and concern are always signs of greatness. When they are coupled with extraordinary intelligence and analytical ability, greatness turns into a phenomenon. You are such a phenomenon. You have achieved success in many spheres of public life: as a senior diplomat; as the principal adviser to one of our Prime Ministers; as the Deputy

Chairman of the Planning Commission (and thus one of the architects of our planning process); and as the Vice-President of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (and thus a major influence on science policy). However, important as all that may be as a chronicle of achievement, that is not what I should like to felicitate you for on this occasion. The fact is that each one of these positions has been occupied by someone else, earlier and later.

What makes you unique is the ensemble of qualities that is contained within you: integrity of the highest order, courage, commitment, wisdom — and, above all, humour — to name just a few. Such men are not born everyday. And, when they are, they change the world. For many of us, you, Mr. Haksar, have made the world a wee better place to live in. You have often succeeded where God (*if* He is up there) must have given up. So, let me say, on behalf of many, 'thank you'.

A Bouquet

ABU ABRAHAM

One man in his time plays many parts, but P.N. Haksar has played more than most people I have known. Versatility is genius.

Over the years my initial respect for him has turned into a kind of awe. Every time I have listened to him speaking at a public function — almost always without a prepared text or even notes — or every time I have read one of his articles in a journal, I have felt that I have learnt something new, that he has stimulated my mind. His formidable intellect is totally original. The language, naturally, is devoid of stock phrases, banalities and overworked generalities, which so many of our intellectuals and politicians wallow in.

When Haksar was the Indian Deputy High Commissioner in London, and for some time the acting one, I was working for the *Observer* and later the *Guardian*. I was also a member of the Indian Journalists' Association, because I was writing for some Indian newspapers and journals as well. We used to have a weekly off-the-record, informal session with Haksar. These were informative and interesting occasions. Often there were frank exchanges, perhaps undiplomatic at times but useful always. He had none of the protocol or the effortless pomposity of many diplomats, Indian and foreign, that one used to meet.

Haksar of course knew what stuff he was made of. I could notice, and appreciate, his enormous self-confidence, both as an intellectual and as an Indian nationalist.

It was, in those days, not easy for Indians in London to deal with their English equivalents without a certain self-consciousness. While old colonial attitudes were gradually disappearing, new forms of paternalism were showing. There was downright hostility, too, as exemplified by an old India hand by the name of Enoch Powell.

There was an organisation at that time called the Britain-India Forum of which Haksar and I were members, and so were a number of Indian journalists and a couple of Indian writers and artists. On the English side there were Kingsley Martin, Dorothy Woodman, Michael Edwardes, Lord Altrincham, among others. They were supposed to be the life and soul of the Forum. I remember how insufferably patronising Kingsley Martin, his companion Dorothy Woodman, and Michael Edwardes (author of various books on India) could be. Haksar used to take them all good-humouredly, as though he was saying to himself that these were liberal relics of the old colonial system. Young Indians like me looked on Haksar as an intellectual who could stand up to them. He was our leader.

In his leisurely hours, either in the India House restaurant at lunch, or at his home in Hampstead in the evening — though these occasions were rare — I have had the pleasure of listening to his words of wisdom and to his boisterous laughter.

He was also a brilliant cook. His *methi gosht* was famous in London among a select group of Indians. No biographer should ignore this aspect of his personality. To what extent his devoted and talented wife, Urmila, contributed to his inspired cooking, I do not know, but I am sure that, as in all his other activities, she is a friend and adviser.

P.P. KUMARAMANGALAM

I first got to know Haksar when he came as Secretary to the Prime Minister in 1967. I met him informally off and on and through these informal meetings we got to know each other well.

He turned out to be an ideal person for the job. He never interfered or took any part in political matters. He did not have a closed mind which is the failing of many bureaucrats. It was therefore easy to deal with him in discussing various matters even when there was disagreement. This was a great help in getting things done.

Haksar suggested to Mrs. Indira Gandhi that she should have informal discussions with the Chiefs of Staff which she accordingly did. She used to invite me over to a private lunch at various intervals. This was a great help to us.

His honesty and integrity is best shown when he disagreed with the late Prime Minister on the Maruti issue. He knew he would suffer for it, which he did. He persisted in spite of that as it was a matter of principle. Dr. Kurt Haku, the educationalist, advocated development of character in the young as the most important task of the educator. He stated that what we want is men and women with strong beliefs who are prepared to defend them against all comers with the inner strength which carries conviction. Haksar has that inner strength.

K.S. DUGGAL

“I am neither a writer nor an artist”, I have heard Mr. Haksar tell his audiences many a time. And yet we know what a fine writer he is; even his remarks on official files, at times, read

like oracles. And those who got an opportunity last year to view an exhibition at the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society gallery of photographs he had been taking as a pastime during the course of his variegated career find it difficult to agree with him in so far as his artistic talent is concerned.

His writing is marked for clear thinking, precise expression and an uncanny understanding of the problem he is talking about. His vision is that of a prophet. But more than his writing as such or the fact of his artistic expression, in view of the key positions he has held in the administrative hierarchy of the country, I wish to record a couple of my observations regarding his promotion of arts and letters.

After Mrs. Indira Gandhi assumed charge of the country as Prime Minister, she started a concerted campaign to educate herself about the more urgent problems the country was face to face with. Accordingly, she initiated a series of dialogues with intellectuals, economists, social scientists and other leaders of public opinion individually or in groups. Where she could not be present personally, she deputed her trusted aides. One such meeting was held with the secretaries of Sahitya Akademi, Lalit Kala Akademi, Sangeet Natak Akademi and National Book Trust. We met at Rabindra Bhavan. Since Mrs. Gandhi was preoccupied, she deputed K. Natwar Singh and B.G. Verghese, then serving on her staff, to meet us.

Everyone of us had something to say. For instance, my friend B.C. Sanyal, who was looking after Lalit Kala Akademi, pleaded that the capital of India, at least, should have an organisation to ensure minimum aesthetic standards in respect of landscape, etc. Similar suggestions were offered by other participants in the dialogue.

When it was my turn to speak as representative of the National Book Trust (NBT), I said that we are not tired of talking about national integration day in and day out but the fact remained that the country did not have any outfit whose function should be to project outstanding writing in one

Indian language into the other Indian languages. As it was, there were 13 Indian languages recognised in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution with highly developed literature in each one of them. Substantiating my point, I stated the case of Thakazhi Pillai's novel that had been translated from Malayalam into English with a grant from Unesco, published in the UK under the title *Chemeen* and travelled back to India; it was only then that we in the North came to know about the novel or its author. This was true of writers in the North in so far as readers in the South were concerned.

Evidently, I had made a valid point. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's aides made a due note of it. And lo and behold, not many weeks had elapsed when we in the NBT received a directive from the then ministry of Education advising us to devise a project under which ten outstanding books in each Indian language should be translated and published in all the Indian languages. A special provision of Rs.10 million was made for the project. Accordingly, NBT launched its prestigious series entitled *Aadan Pradan*. In due course the books published were hailed in all quarters and it appeared that the purpose behind the project was achieved.

It was and it was not. In one of the high-powered committees, commenting on the series, I observed that literature in the Indian languages being so highly developed, it hardly covered the classics obtaining in the respective languages. As a result, significant contemporary writing remained unnoticed. Under the ideal conditions, any outstanding writing in one Indian language should be made available to readers in other Indian languages within a period of one year or so. This suggestion, too, reached the appropriate quarters and before long a new project was approved and additional funds provided for it. The project was again assigned to NBT.

I was naturally keen to find out who was so perceptive in the Prime Minister's Secretariat to interact with such proposals so promptly. It was no other than P.N. Haksar,

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister.

While I was still busy with the preliminaries of the new project (I had yet to make up my mind what to call it), I was called back by the ministry of Information and Broadcasting to which I belonged and attached to the Planning Commission as Adviser (Information). I plunged into the new assignment and lost touch with NBT altogether.

It seemed that my successor in the Trust failed to appreciate the difference between the new project and *Aadan Pradan*. Accordingly, it was suggested to government that the two projects might be merged since they had identical scope. The ministry of Education had no objection but since the project had been started at the instance of the Prime Minister's Secretariat, the file was referred to it. Prompt came the reply that the two projects were distinctly different and needed to be pursued independently.

It is a very, very minor issue. Nobody could have noticed it. But such faithful implementation of national policies was ensured by a watchdog under the stewardship of P.N. Haksar who was then the chief functionary in the P.M.'s Secretariat.

As it happened, Haksar, too, was not destined to stay in the P.M.'s Secretariat for long. He was later shifted to the Planning Commission as Deputy Chairman. Interestingly, the two projects were quietly merged thereafter by NBT.

I had my first personal encounter with Haksar in the Planning Commission in my capacity of Adviser (Information). A senior foreign service officer who had headed the External Publicity division of the ministry of External Affairs for several years had hardly any use for my expertise in Plan publicity. And since by then it was a proven fact that the fifth Five-Year Plan was a non-starter, he advised me in our very first meeting, "Rather than publicising Plan activity, I would be happy if you manage to keep the press as far away from me as possible." It gave me a rude shock, but in due course I learnt to appreciate every word of it. The realities of the country's economy were frightful and these had started casting their dark shadows on the planning process.

Under the circumstances, until my departure from the Planning Commission on my superannuation in 1976, I had little to do with my Deputy Chairman.

Recently, introducing him in an international seminar over which he was presiding, I said: "We have in our midst, perhaps, the tallest intellectual around." When it was Haksar's turn to speak, he remarked in his typical manner, "My friend Kartar Singh was carried away by heart rather than head when he described me the way he did." However, I have since been vindicated by a recent decision of the ministry of Culture inviting him to lead a commission to review the functioning of the three national academies — Sahitya Akademi, Lalit Kala Akademi and Sangeet Natak Akademi — and suggest how the three outfits could serve the nation better. My conviction is that there could be no better choice and under Haksar's guidance we are going to have meaningful direction in the realm of arts and letters.

UMA SHARMA

There are not many whom I hold in such high esteem as Haksar Sahib, which is how I address him. A lovable man, a venerable figure and a dynamic personality, his activities reflect an incisive mind and one whose involvement is complete in whatever he takes up. What I feel most important to record is that he is one man who has been so gloriously free from bureaucratic attitudes especially when it came to culture.

When I came to know him better, I found him to be a man of profound scholarship — so well versed in Sanskrit and other branches of learning. And then there is such abounding grace in everything he does, so rare what with the hybrid culture of the nouveau riche taking over the city these days. He is most open-minded, large-hearted and

affectionate too, all of which made it possible for me to develop a relationship which I can only call beautiful.

For me, he has been a tower of strength and a morale-booster, which we as artistes are so much in need of from time to time. Like many of my colleagues in the profession, I also have had my share of depression. And I would not get over it until I have spoken to him. He is full of warmth and humour — the silver lining when everything around you seems to eclipse your spirit.

My first impression of him was of an elegant, handsome man radiating the old charm of aristocracy, culture and taste. Those were the heady days of the 1960s when Delhi was having a cultural resurgence in dance, drama and music. I was going through my formative years. Incidentally, my first meeting with him also happened to be my first visit to the United Kingdom. I was simply scared to be facing a personality whose fame as a diplomat had already spread far and wide.

To my surprise, I found Haksar to be a man of great simplicity and unassuming manners and the quality was always there no matter what responsible positions he held both at home and abroad. To return to my first meeting, I had gone to London to perform in a cultural festival. After the show, I was asked to perform at the official residence of the High Commissioner. I was as much thrilled as I was frightened to perform before a distinguished gathering. The incident, I remember most vividly, is the time when I had forgotten to carry the ankle-bells.

I was so scared that I broke down. Haksar noticed this and came over to me enquiring why I was crying. I told him what had happened. He simply patted my back and said, “What is there to cry? Sit in the car and go and get the *ghungroos*”. I did it but my nervousness continued. Once the recital was over, I felt tired and immediately after removing my make-up I went to sleep. At the dinner table, Haksar found I was missing and a search was made. Mrs. Haksar, finally, located me in the make-up room. Her husband immediately directed

that I be given food.

Such are the human qualities of the man. Not many know about his interest in classical arts, particularly music. Of course, he is very fond of Kathak, and told me once that he had seen all the great masters perform including Shombhu Maharaj. In a message, which I cherish most, in the days when I was building my Kathak school, Haksar appreciated the struggle I had to go through. "In our country this has become inevitable with disappearance of the *gharana* system and its patrons. We have failed to evolve appropriate institutional arrangements, free from whimsicality, to replace the traditional system."

Such insight into the need for preservation of cultural institutions could only come from a man of Haksar's qualities. Artistes need him more than anyone else. Time and age has not diminished his vigour and, certainly, not his faith in the set of values that he has been upholding throughout his distinguished career. May he go from strength to strength and enjoy many more years of creative activity.

MULK RAJ ANAND

Afterword

My dear Haksar,

Greetings on your 75th birthday!

When I was asked to write a paper on some aspect of your lifework, I wrote back saying that I would prefer to write a letter to you, as I am not sure on what aspect of your various thinkings and doings I can write from a partial awareness of your thoughts and deeds, especially during your years in the Establishment.

Even this personal letter about you as a human being will be circumscribed by the fact that you have always kept a grave reserve about your person.

Only recently, when you gave me your autobiography to read, did I get to know some of the facts about your childhood, boyhood and youth, which I don't believe will be known to anyone until that book is published.

But, as I am a novelist (not in the sense of romancier, but as a follower of Goethe in introducing the *Bildungsroman* into the Indian novel), I did write in my diaries of the 1930s some notes about our get-togethers, our talks, and our work in building up consciousness about the Indian struggle for freedom, which was our obsession during the days of voluntary exile in the U.K. So I am going to put down some of my hunches about you from the memories of those jottings.

I remember that in one of my notes I wrote:

“I think P.N. Haksar is ‘Student Molotov’, the kind of studious man who loves books above other things, as Molotov is said to do. I dare not say this to him. I told Krishna Menon one day, when he asked me, ‘Why Haksar had not shown up in India League office for months?’ ‘Oh!’ I said, ‘he is Student Molotov. He reads too much and has little time to come and do much of the donkey work of putting addresses on envelopes for your circulars.’

Krishna Menon, who seldom liked other people’s sense of humour, said: ‘Have you told him this?’ ‘No!’ I said; ‘there are some things which can only be said behind people’s backs.’

This explains why we more often met in your room in our casual study circle. You had more books in your shelves for reference during debate.

I think you will bear me that whenever we were stumped about some important theory, you always were able to get the text out.

For instance, when we were discussing the spirit of history, as Hegel exalted it almost as an Absolute, and Marx, once a young Hegelian, reinterpreted the dialectic of Hegel’s *Phenomenology* and made it into Historical Materialism, you picked up Marx’s *Thesis on Feuerbach*, where there was some reference to this transformation.

The approach of both Hegel and Marx was similar as that of master and pupil, but Marx put the ‘Spirit’ back ‘on its feet’, by asserting the priority of the means of production over ideology. Thus it is obvious, as you quite rightly pointed out then, that Hegel’s approach to history alone made historical materialism of Marx possible.

Among our colleagues in the study circle, Feroze Gandhi, K.T. Chandy, sometimes Iqbal Singh, and Krishna Shelvankar, it was the last scholar who accepted my appellation about you, with an understanding smile. He knew what I meant because he himself was of like mind with you. Though he left his library in America he seemed to read

at least one big tome a week burning ‘midnight oil’, as the phrase goes. And, in his case, I had impertinently christened him the ‘New Krishna who would never write a new *Gita*!’

He did not mind the appellation, because it was less mischievous than the references behind Krishna Menon’s back to our acknowledged leader in London, as ‘Krishna of the *Gopis*’! This appellation was, of course, borrowed from others.

About Krishna Shelvankar’s learning, I think, we can both say it was wider than ours, because he had read more about European political thoughts and American history, during his research days in Wisconsin, than we had.

Anyhow, apart from the levity of my pseudonyms, I mean to say something important.

We were, each one of us, deeply interested in the history of our time — not only as it was being made by the opposition of rebels against imperialism and fascism all over the world, but in the dialectic of daily events in our own country, as the news came of the dingdong battle of ideas going on between the various parties, involved in the struggle for freedom and the forces ranged against those parties from among themselves and the not-so-benign Raj interested in the notorious *divide et impera*.

In our discussions, those colleagues who were students of the London School of Economics owed a good deal to the teachings of Professor Harold Laski. He himself, as you will remember, had, apart from his writings on political history, taken active part in the promotion of awareness of the Indian struggle. And, later, he had been, with John Strachey and Victor Gollancz, the inspiration behind the Left Book Club movement.

I have always felt, without putting this down on paper, that the political thinking of Prof. Laski was, perhaps, the most educative influence on the Indian intelligentsia of us exiles in England.

And, in so far as he may have influenced Jawaharlal Nehru, and the Congress Socialists, Jayaprakash Narayan,

Minoo Masani, Asoka Mehta and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, his teachings may have percolated into the thinking of quite a few progressives in our National Movement.

And what was the main thesis of Harold Laski?

Those of us who knew him personally and had the benefit of meeting him at home knew that, in spite of the aberrations of Stalin, Professor Laski saw, in the October Revolution, the first genuine emergence of democracy, on the basis of which genuine nation-states may be built.

Until the first world war, he felt, the so-called democracies of the Western nation-states were built on the compromises with monarchy by the bourgeoisie, to camouflage the concept of the ownership of property by the few, not only in their home countries but in the colonial empires.

Laski mocked at the British parliamentary democracy and the British working class worship of royalty. As for the Germans, their belated pseudo nation-state, brought together later than in other countries, by Bismarck, was headed by the Kaiser. And the bogus Duma of Czarist Russia had remained subservient to the Imperial Czar, until he was put aside by the Bolsheviks.

The first time, then, argued Professor Laski, that any genuine people's democracy came into being was when the Bolsheviks upset Czarism and set up the Soviet State, recognising the ex-colonial peoples of the Czarist empire as equal partners in participatory democracy, asking for representatives from the commune upwards to the central collective.

I remember at a small meeting of socialist friends in 'Artillery Mansions', where Jawaharlal Nehru sometimes stayed near Victoria Street, Professor Laski mentioned this thought to Panditji. The latter reacted by asking him whether he had ever considered putting this down on paper, so that Indians might be able to learn the lesson of the Russian Revolution in a concrete manner.

Jawaharlal Nehru felt that whereas in the West, in the face of rival pseudo-nationalisms, there was some awareness of

the hollows of the European democratic nation-states, there was very little questioning of the fundamentals in Asia, where the British parliamentary democracy seemed to have been accepted without questioning. In fact, even Marx's manifesto had not been translated in the languages of India, and it was banned by the British in its English edition.

Professor Laski consoled him by saying that his Indian students were especially conscious of the inner corrosions of bourgeoisie democracy. He hoped India would not inherit this kind of nation-state from the British when the time should come as he was convinced it would come, because of the impossibility of continuance of imperialism in the face of the fascist demand for Lebensraum, which means empires.

The bourgeoisie obsession with property, he felt, cannot last even as the despotism of the Roman emperors had gone. He felt that the later empires had modelled themselves on the aggressive usurpation of lands and resources of the Romans. And social existence of opposing classes had always led, inevitably, to the greed of the few to have more than the vast majority.

I think his books on the *Revolution of our times* may prove to be more decisive, besides the Marxist classics and Leninist writings, for the future of democracy in various parts of the ex-colonial world.

The second world war proved his thesis by and large.

* * *

I feel that in your own thinking you have foreshadowed the emergence of the struggle for participatory democracy in every part of India, though I find much of the writing about the future of India by our younger contemporaries is in terms of an 'Indian national identity', baulked by superficial fulfilment and poetic flights of fancy about our becoming the United States of America or Europe or China.

Some of the new young call India a 'Riddle'. 'Midnight's

Children' expatriates find the country a mess. The idealists seek sustenance in Vivekananda, hoping Indian religion will transform the country by reviving the absolutism of the Vedanta.

Many lay Hindus have literally taken the Ramraj concept of Gandhiji's metaphor and want to bring back Ramanand Sagar's television version, by teaching children monkey tricks and archery of the bow-and-arrow war.

Some of them want the spiritual capital of the country to be around the Ram Janmabhumi temple in Ayodhya, though no archaeologist has found evidence of where Rama was born.

The Muslims yearn to pray to Allah for victory against the Hindus in the Babri Mosque.

The Akali Sikhs want to revive the Miri and Piri of the 18th century against Aurangzeb, by building the Akal Takht into a fort against the secular democratic state!

Parliamentary democracy, which we had, perforce, to adopt, in spite of Professor Laski's warning, is based on a relatively small suffrage. Parliamentarians seldom visit their constituencies. Dependence on big industrial houses for election funds has made the legislatures subservient to the rich.

The preference of the West for rightists everywhere, Militarists, Dictators and even Fundamentalists, forces our 'nation-state' to ape the methods and norms and economics of Mr. Reagan and Mrs. Thatcher who preach 'get rich quick and kick everyone else'. The U.S. crusade against 'the evil empire' of Russia's communists has offered justification to the merchants of death to build up arsenals of nuclear arms, which can wipe out the planet earth a million times over. Thirty United Nations conferences have refused to raise the prices of our raw materials in ratio to the dollar and pound prices of the machines they sell us.

You yourself have said this and more in the journal, *Man and Development*. I am afraid the naive intelligentsia of our new young are inclined towards the consumer civilisation of

the West and do not understand that, if only we could save our skies, earth, rivers, forests, and keep together in Nehru's proverbial 'unity in diversity', we might, by achieving basic plenty, survive, in some degree of integral living with nature, if there is no nuclear holocaust.

As a rank amateur in economic and social sciences, I have been wanting you to refer your readers to Gandhiji's *Hind Swaraj*.

With a pertinacity of instinct, which was peculiarly his, the Mahatma had foretold in his pamphlet *Hind Swaraj* that if we took parliamentary democracy of Westminster from the British, we would borrow a 'prostitute who will be bought and sold'. (Those were his words. And he apologised for using such sharp language.) But he was convinced that only if we adopted participatory democracy from the village upwards we might build up integral awareness of rights and duties. He wanted the Panchayats to be elected on full suffrage to be run by intelligent young people. He wanted proportional representation in the Zilla Parishads, the State Legislatures and the Lok Sabha.

In this way he felt that many demands could be answered at the village or Zilla Parishad level and there would be no need for *morchas* of onion growers demanding better prices in South Maharashtra. The tribal people of Bihar, Andhra and Orissa would have been able to rule themselves and the Harijans would have demanded their share in self-rule and development in the village, thus starting the process of ending rejection on grounds of caste.

This was not as utopian a scheme as it seemed to the lower middle sections, who discarded khadi, put on bushshirts and trousers and have concentrated in the capitals of the states, and in Delhi, in talking shops, which are more noisy than Westminster.

We saw Gandhiji at work, with imperfect weak people around him training their character through Ruskin's 'work is worship' attitude, and how there emerged non-cooperation and those who went to jail under his leadership,

because he had trained them to sacrifice for the cause. He had gone into the thick of frenzy in 'the inferno of madness' where Hindus and Muslims fought each other over the cow and pig heads polluting their shrines and he had calmed them.

When asked: "What is your goal in education when India obtains self-rule?" he had answered:

"Character building."

He added: "I would try to develop courage, strength, virtue, the ability to forget oneself in working towards great aims. This is more important than literary academic learning which is only a means to this greater end."

Further he said:

"I would feel if we succeed in building the character of the individual, society will take care of itself. I would be quite willing to trust the organisational society to individuals so developed." All this was because he thought in terms of the then 700,000 villages of India and not only in terms of the small and big metropolises.

I am not suggesting that Jawaharlal Nehru and his colleagues in the leadership are to be blamed for accepting parliamentary democracy and promoting planned economy from the Centre with an overall view of total development. But the middle and lower middle sections, who get elected to the legislatures, have modelled themselves on a pseudo-British democracy, which itself only yielded to social welfare when the Socialists won power, especially after the second world war.

Even in our own country we see that without apologising for the Left, or casting aspersions on them for using dogmatic language, they have been trying to integrate parliamentary State Legislature with Panchayat and Zilla Parishad democracy.

They have carried out 80 per cent land reforms, trained a young cadre of intelligent teachers and students in the villages, who have been elected to the Panchayats and Zilla Parishads.

In a personal tour of two West Bengal districts, Burdwan and Midnapur, I have seen the kind of development which Gandhiji would have liked. I don't know if it is Communism, or Gandhism, or Nehruite social democracy. The label is certainly 'communism'. But just as the capitalist B.M. Birla put a hundred looms in his model village so has the Left coalition given looms to every village, to enable women to earn a hundred or more rupees a month.

The primary school works under teachers trained to impart education of the 'learning by doing' pattern of Gandhi and Zakir Hussain. There is a cottage hospital in every hamlet and in the Zilla Parishad, with more highly trained cadre. And there is constant training, bee-keeping training, machine shop training, fisheries training, a hundred looms, a good secondary school with dedicated teachers, a hospital running day and night!

In two or three elections, where the Left coalition won majorities in the Panchayats and Zilla Parishads, there is a kind of building up of character of representatives to the State Legislature.

These are beginnings and not perfected organisations but the inertia is gone. There are no free meals but everyone obeys the law of the 'bread labour'.

I see that this kind of development in the villages and the districts has not been achieved in Calcutta. But it seems the Bihari labour, still loyal to big landlords and *Ma-Baaps*, voted against the Left.

They probably forgot that they have come away from their own state where the peasantry, the tribal people and the lower middle sections are openly being denied the right to live by the landlords, who own more than a hundred, a thousand, two thousand, five thousand, ten thousand acres of land, with the police on their side. And successive Congress governments have failed to give the peasantry, the Harijans, and the tribal people, social justice.

I wanted to write to you for some time to edit a whole number of *Man and Development* from findings, by research teams, who could go into two or three districts of West Bengal and do mass observation surveys of the kind which Tom Harrison did in the U.K., in the time of Means Test agitation, especially in the Midlands.

I suggest that National Integration, for which you are the convener of a panel, cannot be brought about by modelling India on any other country but itself. That model can be evolved from within the diversities on the common demand for basic plenty!

If this demand is camouflaged by the banners of various communalisms, then there is going to be frequent disruption in more areas than one, because the demand for bread and water is a natural urge, released by political freedom in many more peoples than were aware of their needs in the British period. Then they had lost all hope, until the freedom struggle brought awareness of possibilities. Now, everyone demands his rights. Naturally so! And there is no denying the urges of people, who see that some have got more than they need and the vast majority have much less than they had before, the situation being made more tragic because the gains of the few are mostly from corruption while the deprivation of the many is due to causes people don't understand.

You are an inveterate committed intellectual, who has not apologised for your affiliations with the cause of social justice. And I know that your respectable status as an elder statesman will not prevent you from leading the unacknowledged legislatures towards a questioning of their consciences, in which there may be some residual feelings of Gandhiji's love for the rejected and the deprived.

With warm regards and the hope that you may have more years of thinking and doing, with your eyesight restored enough to finish your autobiography, to inspire the new young with your own dynamic.

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Several academic, scientific and artistic disciplines are represented in this book. The twenty-six eminent authors include bureaucrats and scholars, diplomats and planners, scientists, and captains of industry, journalists and literary men, as well as performers of the fine arts. They bring into focus issues that are crucial to the function of governing in present-day India, particularly in such areas as administration and foreign policy, education and welfare, planning and development of an industrial culture and a scientific spirit. Many of them also discuss Haksar the man and his wide interests.

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